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ARMENIAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA



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Cover Photo: Map of Artsakh/An Artsakh girl returning to Stepanakert/Damaged Ghazanchetsots Cathedral in Shushi/Mamik-Dadik Monument.

# Populate Christian Artsakh

*The land might identify history; people identify the land.*

By **Zaven Khanjian**, AMAA Executive Director/CEO

It was not planned this way. But we know, **"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways."** Isaiah 55:8

The year 2020 was the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of AMAA's entry to Artsakh. A thoughtful celebration was planned in Shushi and Stepanakert for September 2020. A few good people made early reservations to join the AMAA's family in special worship services, an official inauguration at Camp Bedrosian, cultural events, a theatrical presentation and a formal banquet in none other than Shushi.

**God had other plans for my people.**

A year of unprecedented affliction is behind us, the memory of which brings chills to the soul of every Armenian around the globe. COVID-19, crisis in Syria and Lebanon, the horrendous destructive August 4 explosions in Beirut, are painful memories which will haunt us for a long time.

The calamitous end of the 44-day war in Artsakh, however, was a game changer. A nation is mourning the martyrdom of thousands of its youngest and brightest defending a Homeland, for which generations of forebears had sacrificed their lives. A nation is mourning thousands of heartbroken mothers, widows and children, whose family trees bear the pain of axed branches by the chronic heinous assault of a century past, ironically by the same perpetrator. A nation is mourning the loss of vast territories of historic land, punctuated by innumerable monuments of its opulent Christian heritage.

The challenges ahead are monstrous and huge as the political and institutional leadership in Armenia struggles to carve a course to the future, amidst a mountainous pile of uncertainties.

Answers are sought for the failure of 30 years of defense and diplomatic institutional build up. Amidst an atmosphere of dread and worry, popular sentiment in Armenia and the Diaspora struggles to reckon with the new reality on the ground, measure future expectations and devise a new path forward.

God has the answer for all trouble. When the disciples panicked in the sinking ship and woke Jesus up to save them, He said "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Matthew 8:26, and there was a great calm.

By November 10, the date of ending all hostilities, the AMAA had a mandate. **Encourage and assist the return of the resettled population of Artsakh to their homes, and immediately resume all AMAA operations in Artsakh proper.** AMAA representatives in Armenia and Artsakh were on top of a task efficiently accomplished. Within days, the offices of AMAA and Evangelical Church of Armenia in Stepanakert were open. The staff was back on duty and by December 1, 2020, AMAA institutions in Askeran, Martakert and Stepanakert were in full motion.

Historic Armenian land is home to an unalienable presence of Christian and national heritage. Most of the land is forcibly devoid of its indigenous population. **The land might identify its history while people identify the land. If Christian and Armenian Artsakh is to be saved and preserved it should be fully repopulated.**

In the coming years, while the concerned and engaged political leadership strives to win Artsakh's right of self-determination, the AMAA, with unmatched faith, determination and goodwill, will fervently support and sustain the population, embrace the land, develop and flourish it and pursue the happiness of its people.





AMAA's spiritual, educational and humanitarian programs and services have for 25 years touched lives in Artsakh, one child at a time. The post-war needs have multiplied our efforts launching multiple new services and programs to alleviate the pain, relieve the trauma and help raise a new, creative and innovative generation.

**This issue of the AMAA News is dedicated to Artsakh and its people.** It is a testimony of God's love reflected on the people of the Christian Armenian enclave. It is also a tribute to those, who having heard the loss of decades long remarkable legacy of service in Shushi to the stomping feet of invaders, lovingly asked, 'can we rebuild in Stepanakert?'

Yes! We can rebuild and we shall.

Thank you for your support of our efforts to uphold our brothers and sisters in Artsakh. ☐

February 5, 2021

# Faith and Hope with Love

By **Nazareth E. Darakjian, M.D.**, AMAA President

**T**he New Year's Day Holiday is unique among holidays because it celebrates the future as opposed to other holidays that commemorate an event in the past. Christmas, Easter, Independence Day and even Thanksgiving are all celebrations of a significant event in history. New Year's Day celebrates HOPE – hope for happiness, peace, good health and success in the accomplishment of goals. This common sentiment is practically universal on the planet as people of all persuasions wish each other a Happy New Year. For the Apostle Paul, hope is one of the three essential qualities of a Christian together with faith and love. Faith and hope are actually interrelated. In Hebrews 11:1 we read: "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."



The fact remains that faith cannot work without hope and neither can hope without faith.

There is no question that the New Year fills us with hope especially after a year like 2020. We are hopeful that the numerous vaccines against COVID-19 will finally get this pandemic under control and reestablish "normalcy" in our world. We hope that the people of Artsakh will be able to repair and rebuild their houses and workplaces and be able to live in security and peace. We hope that a lasting peace will finally arrive in Syria and Lebanon and the people will be able to make a living with valuable compensation and have access to their savings. This is what we hope and pray for as human beings, but God has His own plans which may be different from what we wish for. As difficult as it may be for us to understand, God's plan is the best plan for us and by faith we will ultimately experience that.

In the meantime, we have work to do. It is not enough to make wish lists and resolutions on New Year's Eve if we are not going to do our utmost to accomplish those goals. We must work hard to feed and clothe the orphans, the refugees and the destitute. We must work hard to keep our institutions of learning open in Armenia, the Middle East and the United States. We need to continue to be a lifeline to our summer camps and our churches worldwide where children learn about Jesus and the word of God is preached. This is where love gets into the picture because it is our love for our fellow human beings and our love for God that will propel us into action and help us accomplish our goals and bring to life what we have been hoping for.

So, let us not lose hope that God will deliver us from the pandemic, that He will bring back peace, harmony and security to Armenia and Artsakh and economic recovery to the Near East. Let us not forget to follow what the Apostle Paul has recommended in Romans 12 – "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality."

With God's help we will accomplish our mission. ☐





# AMAA in Artsakh

## Between Light, Crisis and Hope

By Ani Paitjan\*

**T**he life of human beings is not smooth nor easy. Armenians felt it very strongly during the Fall of 2020. Armenians in Artsakh, Armenia and in the Diaspora have been through a rocky, torturous and deadly path.

On September 27, Azerbaijan attacked Artsakh and triggered a war that lasted for 44 days. As a result, thousands of Armenian lives were lost, among them civilians. More than 3,000 young soldiers died fighting to protect their ancestral lands. Roughly 75% of Artsakh territories were forcibly handed over to Azerbaijan, and more than 16,000 Artsakh residents are currently displaced, without a home. This is the overview of the situation.

The war impacted all Armenian individuals and organizations around the world. The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) is no exception. The charitable organization, which has been serving as the missionary arm of the Armenian Evangelical Church for 102 years, was established in Armenia in 1991 and in Artsakh in 1995. Its purpose

is clear: *"to pronounce in word and deed the love of Christ to the Armenian people and thus encourage them in the keeping of their faith, culture and national identity."* To pursue its mission, the AMAA Armenia Artsakh Branch started to implement many programs throughout the majority of the Artsakh regions.

During the war of Fall 2020, the AMAA lost its buildings in regions taken by Azerbaijan.

However, these losses did not demotivate the Association.

But before moving forward, let's go back to the 25 years of AMAA presence in Artsakh.

### 1995 Artsakh, the Land of Hope

The Armenian Missionary Association of America started its mission in Artsakh in 1995, after the first Artsakh War between Armenia and Azerbaijan. That war ended with the signing of a ceasefire agreement in 1994.

Following the halting of fighting, the AMAA's Artsakh office was opened in Stepanakert.

But the AMAA was even present before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Following the 1988 disastrous earthquake, the AMAA, through the efforts of then Executive Director Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian, entered Armenia with one major program centering on orphans and childcare. Registering in Armenia in 1991, shortly followed by the registration in Artsakh as a humanitarian organization, the AMAA projects grew and developed. The AMAA is the first organization from the Diaspora to be registered in Artsakh.

From that moment, the AMAA began implementing programs to support residents in the region with three principles in mind: support Armenians of Artsakh to meet their spiritual and material needs by inspiring and serving them; strengthen moral and spiritual foundations to form a good society; and promote Armenian people's welfare. These issues were tackled by providing financial, educational, cultural and income generated programs.





Hagop and Lydia Baghdikian KG in Stepanakert.



AMAA Center in Stepanakert.

Step by step, the AMAA's activities grew. The activities of the Association were most dynamic in Shushi, the cultural capital of Karabakh (Artsakh). Help was provided to the soldiers in Stepanakert and Shushi after the first Artsakh War. And after the War, this support spread to the other regions of Arstakh.

Arsen Manasyan was the AMAA's first Artsakh Representative. He laid the foundation of the Association's work in Artsakh and oversaw its expansion.

*"In terms of development, the AMAA has always been flexible. Through time, the Association added new programs or developed others based on societal needs. For example, we felt that people needed to have specific skills. So, we established a program to develop skills that would help them find a job. We financially supported unemployed people with a condition: an individual should learn a skill in a sector and then he or she would get financial support to start a business,"* said Mr. Manasyan.

In 1999, the AMAA opened the first kindergarten in Shushi. As a result, the number of children going to the kindergarten in the city significantly increased. The same year, a medical center with a maternity department was built in Martakert region, in the village of Kichan. Later, a kindergarten was also established in the area. Two years later, the capital of Stepanakert saw the opening of the Hagop and Lydia Baghdikian Kindergarten.

*"Artsakh residents were facing social issues. And the Association's goal was to lighten this burden. We observed that social issues are also related to education. For example, the issue of kindergartens. There*

*were no kindergartens for the children, not even in Stepanakert. For this reason, we started our second big program, the kindergartens program in 1998. Until 2003 we operated 5 kindergartens in various regions of Artsakh,"* added Mr. Manasyan.

Besides kindergartens, the AMAA opened educational day care centers called the *Shogh* Day Centers. In total, five centers flourished in Armenia and Artsakh. Three of them are located in Armenia, in the cities of Yerevan, Gyumri and Vandazor and two others are in Artsakh, in Shushi and Askeran.

Over time, Summer Camps and various Youth Programs popped up.

*"Summer Camps and our Youth Programs continue to be some of the most important ministries of the AMAA. Children come together to rest, relax, rejuvenate, re-energize. They come to receive spiritual, cultural and physical nutrition. They come to learn about their significance as children of God, as children of a people with a rich Christ centered history and heritage. And they leave the camp led with the love of God, the fellowship of the campers and counselors, and they share all these blessings with family and friends throughout the year; with hopes that they will meet once again next year to be blessed again,"* the AMAA's website reads.

Rev. Dr. René Léonian was AMAA's Representative in Armenia and lived there for 17 years, from 1994 to 2011. But he was also deeply involved in AMAA Artsakh. He is at the root of the creation of kindergartens, youth centers, summer camps and many other programs.

*"When we began in 1995, our program started with child sponsorship. Children were sponsored in Stepanakert, Shushi,*

*Martakert, Askeran and Martuni. I remember the very first sponsored child. Her name was Ovsanna. And this moment was very moving to me. It was also pure happiness to have been able to build very quickly youth centers and camps for children. I've seen hundreds and hundreds of children happy to be together; to play, sing and dance together. When you see this, you understand that this young generation has the right to live happily in their land. That was a source of joy for me,"* reminisced Rev. Léonian.

In practice, AMAA's more than two decades-long work in the little republic is immense. Lusine Abrahamyan, Head of Social Programs in Artsakh, is one of the key people who is managing the effective implementation of the social projects in the area.

*"The AMAA has been implementing the sponsorship program in Artsakh for about two decades. About 150 families from Shushi, Askeran, Stepanakert, Hadrut and Martakert take part in these programs. These families receive physical aid every three months. The program helps with the children's summer vacation and art-related issues. We also help children with health problems receive proper medication and treatment. The AMAA additionally implements an infant formula program in Artsakh. About 150 newborn children are included in the program,"* said Ms. Abrahamyan. Based on a pediatrician's recommendation, the program helps mothers who for medical reasons cannot breastfeed or for infants who cannot digest milk.

Siranush Ayvazyan, a mother of a beneficiary, is faithfully sending her child to the *Shogh* Day Center of Askeran. Her little



boy is going to the kindergarten in Martakert named after Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian.

*"As a parent, I would say that this is the best project for children in the world. Let me say that my child is very active. He loves it, kindergarten is great, the teachers, the children,"* said Ms. Siranush with a smile.

## Times of War

The AMAA used to have youth centers, camps and offices in Stepanakert, Shushi, Askeran and Martakert regions. During the war that began September 27, 2020 and ended November 10, Azerbaijani forces took the city of Shushi, where the AMAA had Camp Bedrosian, the Bilezikian Kindergarten and one of the *Shogh* Day Care Centers.

During the war, around 30 grandmothers and grandfathers took shelter in Camp Bedrosian. They did not want to leave their lands since their grandchildren were fighting on the frontline. The Camp was also used as a regular safety hub for transporting and resettling multitudes from the war Zone to the safety of Armenia. Gayane Eghyazaryan, Social Worker of the *Shogh* Day Center, and Sarik Gasparyan, Custodian of Bedrosian Camp in Shushi, took care of these elderly people who found refuge at the Camp, feeding them and taking care of all their basic needs until October 29.

According to Harout Nercessian, AMAA Armenia Representative, before the war, the Camp in Shushi hosted around 800 children every season. They were playing, learning, creating and being nurtured. *"Unfortunately, tense fighting was taking place right next to this Camp. Thank God, we had no deaths or injuries,"* added Mr. Nercessian.

Despite the dangerous situation throughout Artsakh, the non-profit Association continued to provide its service but with a smaller staff. Initially, there were 100 employees, but because of the constant shelling, many of them fled. During the war, the green valleys were covered with bomb smoke. Viktor Karapetyan, AMAA Artsakh Representative, decided to stay. He was visiting people in their homes during the war. He would go to the basements and shelters where families were hiding from bombs. People were staying for days, even weeks, without leaving the shelters. Mr. Karapetyan would bring them food and provide emotional and spiritual support.

*"First, I am an Artsakhtsi, I am Armenian. I fulfilled my duty and did what was necessary at that moment. I wasn't in a foreign place; I was in my Homeland. Second, I am the Representative of the AMAA in Artsakh and our main work is with people, our aim is to serve other people. And third, as a Christian, it is my task to reach out and help people in hard times. At that moment, I did not feel fear. Fear was put in the background. The important thing is that help was needed, and my main goal was to be useful,"* said Mr. Karapetyan.

When the shower of bombs and missiles was landing all over Artsakh, residents fled their houses to seek refuge in the city of Goris. Goris is one of the last cities in southern Armenia before entering Artsakh. There too, the AMAA sent help, clothes and food.

Throughout the war, the number of displaced people who ended up in Armenia increased. In this chaotic situation, the AMAA workers and volunteers rolled up their sleeves and hosted more than 200 displaced *Artsakhtsis* in their Camp Sheen Shoghig in Hankavan, located in Kotayk Province. Material help was provided, the children continued to get an education, and of course, food and clothes were provided to those who fled the war. The AMAA also allocated one million dollars to the *Hayastan All Armenia Fund* to help rebuild Artsakh.

*"We mourn the loss of Shushi, Hadrut, Karvajar and other regions of Artsakh. But we also realize that we must move forward and do everything possible to support the restoration of our beloved Artsakh,"* reads the AMAA website.

In AMAA's Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian's opinion, the Association's challenge is to continue its benevolent work in times of chaos.



The official opening ceremony of Camp Bedrosian in Shushi.



Relief supplies at the AMAA Center in Stepanakert.

*"When all the dust settles and the dark clouds wither, from the obscurity of the murky haze a rainbow will emerge revealing the resilient image of the mission. Whether in supporting youth who pursue a degree in higher education, or feeding the hungry, quenching thirst and sheltering the displaced and rebuilding the Homeland, the AMAA unconditionally will carry the mission forward,"* wrote Mr. Khanjian.

## Post War Support: Mental Health, Education, Material Aid

Right after the war, the activities of the AMAA resumed in Stepanakert, Askeran and Martakert.

The end of the war further boosted the motivation of the AMAA staff. Immediately following the ceasefire, Zaven Khanjian called Harout Nercessian and told him to do his utmost to help the Artsakh evacuees



return to their land and immediately resume their operations.

A week after the ceasefire agreement between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia, the seven AMAA Armenia employees drove to Stepanakert to inspect the aftermath of the war and prepare for the opening of the office there. The office was damaged because a bomb had exploded on a neighboring building. The staff, along with the AMAA Artsakh Representative, spent six hours cleaning and fixing the office and the sanctuary of the Evangelical Church of Armenia. The next day, the office reopened its doors, ready to welcome those who needed help.

*"From our office in Stepanakert, we currently distribute food to displaced families from Shushi to our sponsored children, and to the children's families who attend the Shogh Day Care Center. We also plan to include new families in the sponsorship program - the children of the families of the fallen soldiers and missing servicemen,"* added Lusine Abrahamyan, Head of Social Programs in Artsakh.

Since the end of the conflict, the kindergartens and youth centers in Askeran,

Stepanakert and Martakert are lively again and filled with the laughs of children from Artsakh.

Grigori Beglaryan is 10 years old and is from Askeran. Now that the situation is more peaceful, he is happy to be back at the Shogh Day Center in his town.

*"I go to school in the morning then I come to Shogh after school. We are four children, three of us attend the Shogh program, and one is of preschool age. Here, we do everything. We learn mathematics, Armenian language, Russian language, English and more,"* he said.

In the Askeran center, Anahit is the one who's in charge of the program: *"The Shogh is an after-school program for children. We have hot food, and we have classes to enhance their skills. We host alternative subjects like painting lessons and engage children in arts and crafts. It is quite a rich program. In terms of the families, we work with the parents with the help of our social worker, the psychologist, the social pedagogue."*

The AMAA has a new challenge in Artsakh: encourage residents of the region to return to their land and focus even more on children so that they have a stronger and brighter future.

The staff has since doubled its efforts in the region while also continuing to offer its services to Armenians in Armenia.

*"The strategy intends to make the old programs more effective and comprehensive and to implement them more efficiently. These programs include social sponsorship, providing infant formula, establishing more Shogh Day Centers, educational kindergartens, and Christian education*



AMAA Armenia Representative Harout Nercessian talks with Artsakh evacuees staying at AMAA's Camp Sheen Shoghig in Hankavan.



Shushi Shogh Center Social Worker Gayane Eghyazaryan works with Anna who lost her father during the war.



AMAA Artsakh Representative Viktor Karapetyan distributes food items to the elderly during the war.

groups," said Viktor Karapetyan, AMAA Artsakh Representative.

A truce in the battlefield doesn't mean that everything is forgotten, and that people will go back to their normal daily lives. Three fields of work have thus been developed.

The first one is the psychological aspect. The mental impact of war on people, and even more on children is immense. For this reason, the AMAA hired and sent psychologists to help the Artsakh residents find refuge at their Hankavan camp.

The emotional and spiritual support is also ensured in all the other centers of Artsakh.

*"Let me give a real example. One of our social workers met an Artsakh child who had found refuge in Armenia along with his family. He stays indoors all the time, locked within blank walls. He has no hobby, and he can't go out, he hears constantly*



his parents mourning those lost in Artsakh, and about their difficulties. It can only have a negative impact on this child. That's why, with psychologists, we can help these children cope with all the stress," said Mr. Nercessian.

The second important aspect is education. AMAA's Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School in Yerevan opened its doors to the children of Artsakh so that they could continue their education. Besides providing a place to learn, the AMAA also collaborates with another Armenian educational organization, Teach for Armenia.

"We want these kids to have fair access to education. We want to give them a special tool which are tablets that have a built-in internet connection chip and special programs installed that are educational. They include the psychological recovery apps as well. This is a joint project with Teach for Armenia, where the AMAA ensures the pedagogical aspect of the project," explained Aren Deyirmenjian, AMAA Armenia Deputy Representative.

The third important point is material aid. Winter has come, bringing with it extreme cold weather. There are still more than 30,000 displaced (some of them are homeless) people who still feel helpless and overstrained. Clothes, from pajamas to coats and from winter shoes to hats, are provided

to the displaced people, with a special focus on children. Besides this, they have access to food, care products and to many other basic necessities.

Even if the government of Artsakh promises housing for those who lost their homes to Azerbaijan, AMAA's office in Stepanakert will continue to do its utmost to help people find a comfortable place to stay. And it will continue to give them material help if they are willing to rent a residence.

"EO-Metterdaad, a Dutch organization, in partnership with Mission Possible gave us a grant to repair and restore Artsakh homes damaged by the war. This is very important because if we want to see the region grow and thrive one day, we must bet on the people here. For this, we need to provide good conditions for the residents," said Mr. Nercessian.

"AMAA has pledged to renovate as part of its post war humanitarian project around 30 to 40 homes that have been damaged by artillery shelling in Stepanakert and other areas. These homes were damaged by shelling and they have become inhabitable for the residents. They have vacated their homes. Right now, they are in temporary places waiting for their homes to be renovated. But the government has limited resources and we hope to be a helping hand in these times where the need

is huge. The winter season has kicked in and people urgently need to return to their homes," added Mr. Deyirmenjian.

When the war started, AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian, wrote strong words that reflected the reality of what Armenians recently faced but also what their essence was made of. *"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed."* (2 Corinthians 4:8-9)

*"I am a believer and I know that these challenges are part of a much bigger plan. The hard time we are currently in is not the end. I feel that God has bigger plans for us. Armenians and Artsakhtsis will experience times of joy. My hope is that God is with us and we will have fortune and happiness. Difficulties make us stronger. They hurt us; we get stronger. They destroy us, we build even better. This is what is given to Armenians. I've seen many things during the war, difficult things. I talked with people who are not on earth anymore. And I believe that everything will be fine, thanks to God and thanks to our soldiers,"* said Mr. Karapetyan.

For this reason, the AMAA believes that it is not the time to give up but to continue to move forward, united and together. □

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\* Ani Paitjan is a CIVILNET Journalist.





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# Artsakh in My Heart

## AMAA's Vision for Artsakh

By **Rev. Dr. René Léonian**, AMAA Representative in Eurasia

Since its founding in 1918, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) has always aimed to be vital to the Armenian people. It is in a Christian spirit, and in the name of love of neighbor, that the AMAA has organized its programs.

The essence of AMAA's work is summed up in its support to churches, its Christian education, humanitarian, educational, cultural and development programs.

After the devastating earthquake in Armenia on December 7, 1988, the AMAA's Board of Directors, under the leadership of its Executive Director Rev. Movses Janbazian decided to invest heavily in Armenia and come to the aid of families in the disaster areas. From the early years of AMAA's involvement in Armenia, the Association partnered with *Espoir pour l'Arménie – Hope for Armenia* of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of France. At the time, the official authorities of Soviet Armenia praised AMAA's mission and service in the Homeland.

On September 10, 1991, the AMAA was officially registered in Armenia to work in two directions (cf. official registration text):

- "To help the Armenian people in spiritual, religious, educational programs and publications.

- through humanitarian programs."

On September 21, 1991, Armenia be-



*The official ribbon cutting ceremony of the AMAA Center in Stepanakert, Artsakh in 1998, with Artsakh Republic Minister of Foreign Affairs Naira Melkumyan, AMAA Executive Director Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian, local/overseas guests, and Armenian Church representatives.*

came independent and immediately afterwards the AMAA established its permanent headquarters in Yerevan (with "Hope for Armenia").

In the fall of 1994, I had the privilege to be the Representative of the Armenian Evangelical World Council and the AMAA. The AMAA's services were originally focused on the earthquake zone, then gradually it spread

to the whole Armenian territory. From time to time, sporadic actions were carried out in Artsakh.

After a few years, the AMAA decided not to neglect Artsakh. Thus, in 1995, the leadership of the AMAA in the United States and the leadership of AMAA in Armenia, decided to set up a permanent center in Artsakh. That same year the



AMAA officially registered in Artsakh as the first Diasporan Armenian philanthropic organization.

This materialized through contacts with the highest authorities of the Republic of Artsakh. It was facilitated by personal ties, but also because the AMAA's reputation in Armenia was appreciated by the President and the Government of Artsakh.

Rev. Janbazian and I had a similar conception of the goal to be reached and shared these objectives with Hagop Manjelian, who was AMAA's Field Director at the time.

Arsen Manasyan, who was appointed Coordinator of the AMAA's programs in Artsakh in 1996, strategically directed our offices in Stepanakert and supervised the AMAA's work throughout Artsakh. His courage and faith in God enabled the realization of our programs in the early years.

While being in full agreement with the objectives enshrined in the official statutes of the AMAA, spiritual and philanthropic action, we believed that Artsakh represented much more than a piece of territory. Artsakh was like a part of us.

During the Artsakh war for independence from 1990 to 1994, it was at the cost of the sacrifice of our soldiers and the Armenian population that we regained our honor and our pride in being Armenian. We understood that the security and independence of Artsakh were the guarantors of the security and independence of Armenia.

That is why it was necessary for the AMAA to invest in many areas of the lives of our brothers and sisters in Artsakh. Very quickly, the AMAA focused on the Christian education aspect of the younger generation, as well as their social, economic, educational and cultural needs. Through these programs, we knew that we would encourage the local people to stay in Artsakh.

The official inauguration of the new headquarters in Stepanakert was held on July 15, 1998. The Government of Artsakh, by its presence at the inauguration ceremony, expressed its support for our patriotic, humanitarian and spiritual action.

That day in Stepanakert with Rev. Janbazian, our international delegation and our local leaders, we first stopped at the Cemetery of the heroes who fell during the liberation war to meditate. Rev. Janbazian deeply moved us by his words filled with gratitude to these young people who fell at the front for the defense of the Armenian borders and for the defense of Armenians all over the world.



*In 1998 local leaders and international guests at Stepanakert Cemetery paid tribute to the heroes who fell during the liberation war.*

Later in the day, we went to Shushi to visit this "impregnable" fortress. We prayed in the magnificent Ghazanchetsots Cathedral. When I left the Church, I asked Rev. Janbazian to follow me and our local Coordinator Arsen Manasyan. The three of us went to visit a house 500 meters away with adjoining land. I said to Rev. Janbazian: "We have a permanent seat in Stepanakert, now we must also set the presence of the AMAA in Shushi, because Shushi is the place where, in 1823, the Swiss missionaries of the Evangelical Mission of Basel settled and, it is there that the Evangelical movement began in the Caucasus (Eastern Armenia) among the Armenians. Rev. Janbazian looked at this beautiful house and said: "It's okay, you find the money in France and we buy it." In the following months, an Armenian from France financed this purchase and that's how AMAA settled in Shushi. This house was also the place where AMAA's Summer Camp Program in Shushi developed. Soon AMAA also took charge of the only kindergarten in Shushi.

We were so happy, along with our Artsakh colleagues, to have been able to help the city of Shushi flourish.

Today, we are still reeling from the defeat of the war and the surrender of November 10, 2020. However, we believe that better days will come. The

AMAA is still present in Artsakh. Our on-site representatives do an extraordinary job and under the leadership of Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian, the AMAA is raising awareness around the world on the situation and needs of Artsakh.

Thanks to the help and prayers of all AMAA members and friends, we will continue to participate in the recovery and development of Artsakh and its people.

We have been shaken, but we believe God has not forsaken us. The children of Artsakh will still sing patriotic and spiritual songs, they will still dance our folk dances, they will continue their studies, and they will grow up healthy, under the benevolent gaze of the Good Shepherd.

So, we will say as usual with faith and comfort: "Next year in Shushi!" □

*\* Rev. Dr. René Léonian was AMAA Representative in Artsakh 1995-2011.*



*The first property bought in Shushi, where AMAA's Summer Camp Program was developed.*





# AMAA MINISTRIES IN SHUSHI ON HOLD

*Bryan Bedrosian at Camp Bedrosian in Shushi.*

By Louisa Janbazian and Jane Wenning, AMAA Staff

*Education and Camps are two of the most important ministries of the Armenian Missionary Association of America worldwide. Because of the 44-day war that took place from September 27, 2020 to November 10, 2020, Artsakh was assaulted, and these ministries were greatly affected.*

*At this time, both Camp Bedrosian and the Bilezikian Kindergarten along with the adjacent Shogh Center in Shushi have been occupied by the Azeris.*

*The following descriptions of these three ministries and the dedication and support of their benefactors show why they have been so important to the AMAA and to the people of Shushi for many years.*

## Camp Bedrosian

AMAA's Camp Ministry in Artsakh officially began in 1995 at Camp Gargar, located near Stepanakert, on the Gargar River. The land was made available to the AMAA by the government of the Artsakh Republic. AMAA's Camp Ministry in Shushi officially began on July 29, 2003. However, the original building and its surrounding 2,000 sq meters of land were purchased in 1998. Later the government donated a dilapidated building and another half-built building to the AMAA which were all renovated and rebuilt. Eventually the AMAA Camp Ministry in Artsakh moved from Gargar to Shushi.

In November 2003, the Bedrosian family (Ernest, Carlotta, Krikor, Catherine, Kenneth and Jane) of Fowler, CA pledged to

the AMAA that they would provide funding to sponsor the Camp in Shushi, which would then be named Camp Bedrosian. Over the following years, many renovations were made to the Camp with the generous support of the Bedrosian family.

On January 1, 2014, Ernest, the eldest of the Bedrosian brothers, passed away. In lieu of flowers, the family requested that family and friends donate to the AMAA's Camp Bedrosian Fund in his memory. Over \$100,000 was raised which enabled the AMAA's Artsakh office to realize much needed renovations including replacing the roofs on the outdoor cabanas which enabled them to withstand the strong Shushi winds. The gift that the children loved most was a

new playground for both the campers and the children from the neighborhood.

The playground opened on July 4, 2014 and the ceremony was attended by Rosie and her husband Bryan Bedrosian, son of Carlotta and the late Ernest Bedrosian and current member of the AMAA Board of Directors. Children and their parents were excitedly waiting at the entrance of the playground long before the opening. Mayor of Shushi Ardzvig Sargsyan expressed great appreciation to the Bedrosian family and the AMAA for their ongoing care for the people of Shushi.

Addressing the children and their families, Bryan Bedrosian said, "The smile of each child encourages us. Always smile and enjoy your childhood."



The words on the plaque displayed at the playground summarizes the sentiment and vision of the Bedrosians: "This playground is dedicated to Ernest, Krikor, and Kenneth Bedrosian of Fowler, CA who, with great passion, promoted national and Christian values among the children of Karabagh." They were driven by the words of Christ, 'Let the children come unto me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these,' Matthew 19:14

In addition to the playground, the six adjacent buildings of Camp Bedrosian included dormitories, dining hall/kitchen, auditorium, an eight-unit apartment building, and a Christian Education Center and AMAA Shushi office which had just recently been completed with funding from the Bedrosian family and had only been used for a few months before the Artsakh war started in September 2020.

Every summer, Camp Bedrosian served about 800 campers. Thousands of needy children of Artsakh and Southern Armenia have been blessed and touched over the years by the generosity of the Bedrosian family. The Camp provided campers with nutritious meals, Christian Education, educational and fun activities. Most importantly, the children experienced the love of God through the loving care of the Camp counselors.

During the 2016 and 2020 Azeri attacks, Camp Bedrosian also served another



*The newly built AMAA Shushi Center.*



*Opening of Camp Bedrosian Playground.*

purpose, that of providing shelter to the families of the evacuees.

"The Bedrosian family has always felt that it is our Christian duty to help Armenians succeed," said Bryan Bedrosian.

"Christianity is key to Armenian success and to the Armenian culture in Shushi. We are heartbroken for the Camp and for the people of Shushi. We hope and pray that Camp Bedrosian will return." □

## The Bilezikian Kindergarten

AMAA Kindergartens cultivate an atmosphere that fosters a child's curiosity and encourages the physical, social and emotional development in a nurturing setting. Dedicated teachers and caring staff provide meaningful learning opportunities for their students in a safe and happy environment. A quality early education remains a sound investment for communities at large because of the foundation established for further learning.

The AMAA has operated five kindergartens. Artsakh, which has a young, growing population, has four (Shushi has one in an occupied area now) and Armenia has one. The AMAA kindergartens are well known and are greatly appreciated by both the parents and the authorities. The kindergartens provide indispensable services to the communities they serve offering quality educa-

tion, nutritious meals to the children, support for the parents and employment.

The AMAA's kindergarten in Shushi was established in 1999 with 50 children and housed in an old building. In 2003, Charles and Doreen Bilezikian of MA pledged to the AMAA their support of this kindergarten. With their generous donation, the kindergarten was totally renovated and provided a great education in a safe environment. They decided to name the kindergarten after Charles' father and called it the Krikor Garabed Bilezikian Kindergarten.

On September 27, 2005, the Bilezikians visited Shushi to participate in the opening ceremony for the Bilezikian Kindergarten. During the ceremony, the Mayor of Shushi expressed appreciation for the generosity and thoughtfulness of this family and the AMAA.

The Kindergarten was comprised of two groups: Arev (Sun) for 3-4-year-old children and Diadzan (Rainbow) for 4-5-year-old children. In addition to the regular subjects, special attention was given to physical education, efforts to enrich and develop motor skills, field trips and educational performances and special events.

On October 24, 2012, the Bilezikians paid another visit to the Kindergarten in Shushi, this time for the opening of the Bilezikian Playground, which was funded by the Bilezikian Family. Over 100 children were welcomed to the Playground. Both the Mayor of Shushi and the regional Governor were present to express their gratitude to the Bilezikians for this beautiful gift to the children of this historic yet very poor city.

"The Bilezikian family is devastated by the loss of this special place in our hearts,"





said Greg Bilezikian, son of Doreen and the late Charles. My late father, Chuck, loved this Kindergarten and Playground. During our visits, the beautiful children deeply touched us, and we are saddened for the children and their families. The Bilezikian family sincerely hopes that we can continue supporting education in Artsakh and Shushi.”

“The AMAA is eternally grateful to the Bedrosian and Bilezikian families for their continued support of our mission in

Shushi and for the legacy they have established,” said Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO of the AMAA. “There is no doubt that we are all devastated by the unthinkable calamity experienced by this nation. The children and their families have experienced tremendous losses. However, my outlook is constructive and positive, and we pray that in time the AMAA can pursue its ministries in Shushi.” □



Charles, Jeffrey and Doreen Bilezikian.

## Shogh Educational Day Center

By **Harout Nercessian**, AMAA Armenia Representative

The Armenian Missions Association of America (AMAA) operates after-school educational *Shogh* Centers located in Yerevan, Vanadzor, Gyumri, Askeran (Artsakh) and Shushi (Artsakh).

The mission of the AMAA *Shogh* Day Centers is to help vulnerable children improve academically, overcome psychological and emotional problems, toward a brighter future.

The Shushi *Shogh* Center opened its doors in January 2016 serving 30 children of low-income and often dysfunctional families.

The professional team of experienced teachers, social workers and psychologists, supported by an expert consultant, assessed each child upon admission. Based on the results, the team devised a development plan unique to the child. The child was then re-assessed semi-annually, and the development program was accordingly adjusted.

The children attended the Center after school, ate a hot meal, and then participated in tutorial and art classes such as painting

and dance. Children and parents received psychological and social worker services to address personal and family problems.

AMAA’s Shushi *Shogh* was unique in the special attention it paid to the families. Gayane Eghyazaryan, the Center’s tireless and determined social worker, spared no effort and did not stop at anything to help *Shogh* families. In addition to her outreach to children, this well respected “angel of Shushi” helped families overcome domestic issues, learn basic hygiene, obtain government aid and defend their rights.

The AMAA Shushi *Shogh* Center enjoyed the respect and full cooperation of the local authorities and NGO’s involved in child protection. Consequently, many local families, especially the children enjoyed multifaceted assistance enabling them to better cope with their problems and hope for a brighter future.

Unfortunately, the Artsakh war forced the closure of Shushi *Shogh* Center. The *Shogh* Center has since reopened at the AMAA Stepanakert offices. Today, the AMAA is actively working on securing new facilities where it can adequately serve the children of Artsakh who remain traumatized by the effects of the war. □



A psychologist works with a student at Shogh Center in Shushi.



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# Testimonials of AMAA Staff Members From Their Last Days of Service in Artsakh

*For me, as for every Armenian, life was once again parted in two – before September 27 and after. The Artsakh branch of the Armenian Missionary Association of America continued its mission and service faithfully when suddenly the day opened with catastrophic news – a war started and there was a new situation and new challenges that required concentration of forces and quick solutions.*

*In the early days of the 44-Day War, about 50 people lived in the AMAA's Camp Bedrosian in Shushi. After the enemy targeted Shushi and intensive bombardment started, 35 people, who refused to move to Armenia, stayed in the Camp.*

*The AMAA provided their food, with some support from the Shushi Administration. The AMAA also provided medicine, hygiene items, flour, clothes and other needed items. The building and rooms were cleaned by our staff. We tried to create comfortable conditions for these people.*

*On October 30, by the decision of the Artsakh President, an order was given to evacuate the entire population of Shushi. The municipality of Shushi provided cars to transport the people. The last time I was at the Camp was on October 28. I picked up goods and visited our employees: Sarik, Gayane and Benik. Usually I went to the Camp 2-3 times a week, more often if necessary.*

*The Principal and staff of the Bilezikian Kindergarten and Shogh Center in Shushi left Artsakh on September 30. I visited our kindergarten building 3 times in October, everything was normal and unharmed.*

*Until November 2, the structures of the Camp were not damaged, only a few shells had fallen on the football field on our property. On November 2, five 500 kg bombs fell on Shushi.*

*The people could not take anything with them due to lack of time. (Translated from Eastern Armenian)*



L to R: Camp Bedrosian Custodian Sarik Petrosyan, AMAA Artsakh Representative Viktor Karapetyan, AMAA Armenia External Relations Coordinator Lusine Ohanyan, AMAA Artsakh Chief Accountant Ashot Hakopyan and Social Worker Gayane Eghyazaryan in Shushi.

**Viktor Karapetyan, AMAA Representative in Artsakh**

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## **On September 27, 2020 the second Artsakh war began.**

*It was necessary to find safe places for the beneficiaries who were part of our programs. These places included shelters near their houses and in basements of private houses. A needs assessment was made in cooperation with the municipality to provide minimum living conditions in their accommodations, such as sleeping facilities, heat and food. We helped large families with the move of the children, the sick and the elderly and did socio-psychological work to deal with panic and fear. We explained safety rules to children and followed up with them. Daily visits were made to various shelters in the city and we organized the relocation of families, women and children to Armenia together with the municipality. The rest of the families in Shushi were provided with food, medicine, beds and daily insulin injections three times a day for those who needed it.*

*After the relocation of the beneficiary families and the women and children, two families remained in the city.*

*AMAA's Camp Bedrosian in Shushi was a temporary shelter for the residents of the villages located near the first line of the Artsakh war. Citizens of Maghavuz, Martakert, New and Old Horatagh, Vank and Hadrut were provided with temporary accommodations in the Camp. In the early days, about 48 residents lived in the Camp – elderly, the disabled and children. After living in the Camp for 1-3 days, the transfer of citizens to Armenia was organized by the municipality and volunteers from Armenia. Food was provided by the AMAA, the State and by the employees of the Shushi branch of*

the Ministry of Emergency Situations. Brother Sarik, Manager of Camp Bedrosian and an employee of the AMAA, were in charge. Benik supervised the cleanliness of the rooms by providing necessary items such as brooms, floor washing clothes, floor washes, trash cans and garbage collectors. I saw to the hygienic condition of the rooms for the sick and elderly who were also provided with food from the Camp kitchen. Socio-psychological work was also done to overcome mental trauma.

After the bombing of the Shushi Palace of Culture, there were 35 townspeople left in the Camp who did not want to go to Armenia. So we furnished the basement as a shelter for them. For that purpose, Camp Bedrosian's electric heaters, beds, mattresses, blankets and pillows were used. The wood left over from the construction in the basement was also used for a stove to prepare the food. A total of three basements were furnished. Policemen from Armenia who were wounded from the bombing also found refuge with us.

Due to the increase of bombings in the city and the priority of the Shushi defense detachments, the supply of food became sparse. All the inhabitants fell ill due to the cold weather. Some of them had chronic diseases: cardiovascular, gastric, joint, diabetes and eye issues. It was also a problem to provide clothes, as they had evacuated their homes without proper clothing. Many did not even have a change of underwear. The AMAA organized a weekly food supply to Shushi. Food was stored and was served in necessary portions, feeding them three times a day. Warm clothes, men's and women's jackets, hats, shoes, slippers, socks, warm underwear and towels were also brought in, as well as necessary hygienic items - wet wipes, soap and washing powder. Residents showered in the bathroom of the canteen building.

Necessary medicine was delivered, and if needed, a doctor was consulted. Lusine, AMAA Armenia's External Relations Coordinator, became our liaison.

We also shared and personally delivered a portion of the food and clothes received under the direction of the Mayor with elderly and sick people living in other shelters of the city. Food was also provided to displaced families from Chartar and Sarushen who were staying in the homes of relatives. Medication was provided to the Mayor to be distributed as needed.

AMAA's Artsakh Representative Viktor, under the direction of the Mayor, provided flour and yeast to a bakery in Shushi, where bread was baked for the policemen of the prison.

The residents sheltered at Camp Bedrosian were evacuated according to a decision by the President of the Artsakh Republic on October 30, 2020. By the instruction at AMAA's Representative in Artsakh, Camp guard Benik and myself were the last employees of the AMAA to leave Shushi. Brother Sarik was fighting in the Defense Army. Due to lack of time and constant bombardment, it was not possible to take any belongings. The furnished basements were handed over to the military. (Translated from Eastern Armenian)

**Gayane Eghyazaryan, Social Worker at AMAA's Shogh Community-Based Day Center**



*Elderly people sheltered at Camp Bedrosian until they were evacuated on October 30.*



# Bravery and Hope Amidst Pain and Uncertainty: AMAA's Post-War Humanitarian Project

By Aren Deyirmenjian, AMAA Deputy Representative in Armenia

**W**hat made it all worthwhile, if it could be reduced to just one moment among so many, was when we made the first trip back after the war had ended and saw the bravery on their faces.

There they were, almost 60 days after it all began. So much changed in these two months; so had we.

It went on for 44 long days, with the ceasefire agreement bringing more trouble than the much sought-after peace. Evacuees amounting to almost 90,000 (mostly women and children) had been displaced into Armenian lands. Now, when hearing the news, however painful it felt, slowly they started to return; at least those who still could. Others chose to stay, out of fear or uncertainty, or simply because the places they once called home were not *there* anymore.

Back in Artsakh, three AMAA kindergartens and two educational day-care centers had reopened, some already at 50% capacity. The people who were not there kept calling to make sure their places were kept reserved. Amid the unthinkable despair, there still was an excitement to return. Staff and personnel were back too, remarkably going around their usual business while heavy reconstruction works in the damaged Stepanakert complex continued.

Post-war, the AMAA quickly embarked on its mission to provide not only relief but to help rebuild what was lost. Both action and reaction, instigated by the AMAA Headquarters in Paramus and strategized with the conviction that speed and attention were vital to recovery and resilience, allowed for a prompt difference in the situation on the ground – even though mourning had not ended.

Staying faithful to its years-long strategy, the AMAA kept its immediate focus again on children and their well-being. Projects were drafted in five areas including providing clothing, educational e-learning, home renovations, family provisions and child sponsorship.

Local textile and clothing manufacturers were mobilized to produce 1,000 sets of

heavy, durable clothes and shoes for children aged six to twelve: 500 male, 500 female.

In a partnership agreement with Teach for Armenia, a 501(c)3 organization, we sought to provide Artsakh children with the tools to access online education and gain continuity in their studies in a pandemic-struck school year. By the end of January, we will have provided 250 needy children with unique tablets that are equipped with internet SIMs, educational software as well as psychological recovery apps.

Due to the damage to their homes, much of the returned population, now in temporary residences, were left asking where they would live. While some were provided government subsidized apartments, many were not. The need for housing being unimaginably huge and the numbers many, it was up to private organizations to step in. Together with the Ministry of Public Works and in partnership with Mission Possible Nederland, we planned to renovate up to 50 apartments and have their residents return to their habitable homes. Work on the apartments began in mid-January.

Provisions to needy families, something the AMAA has done for a long time, were also extended to families from Artsakh or to families from Armenia who had lost family members in the war. We also promised to expand our Child Sponsorship Program to include more children from Artsakh.

From a total population of 156,000, some 100,000 people are now wedged into the current Artsakh proper. Almost 15,000 of those are children under the age of 12. They had never seen a war with such scale and never expected to either, not even in the 1990s, when their fathers and grandfathers claimed the unexpected and unbelievable victory. The fathers have not left Artsakh since that historic war. This is their land that they keep coming back to. Now the children know that too.



AMAA distributed 1,000 children's Bibles to youngsters.



A young girl happy with her new set of clothing.

Still, despite the mounting uncertainties that exist now, this remains a huge moment for them and one that they and their own descendants will remember for a long time. The AMAA hopes to alleviate some of the ambiguities, through aid and through projects with long-lasting effects, but everyone must help. The children we raise now will grow up to make wiser, better decisions. The work starts here, now.

While it may have been a minor detail, the way they smiled courageously as we greeted them seemed to say something. And yet this was not just strength and determination: it was about hope too, and the AMAA was there first to capture it and make sure it was cultivated correctly.

We cannot afford to let go, not in these consequential times. □

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# AMAA Joins Forces with European Charities, Bringing Hope to Artsakh

By William Denk\*

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***Editor's Note: The AMAA expresses its profound gratitude to our European brothers and sisters for their compassion and humanitarian assistance to the people of Artsakh at a time of pain and sorrow.***

**A**fter my first visit to Artsakh in February 2020, I returned in October of 2020 at the height of Azerbaijan's invasion. Everywhere in Stepanakert and Shushi, a distant rumbling, like thunder, could be heard and repeated by Azeri rocket blasts on cities and civilian centers. Viktor Karabetyan, AMAA's Representative in Artsakh, first took me to the famous 19<sup>th</sup> century Holy Savior Cathedral in Shushi, which had previously been restored from Azerbaijan's earlier terror attacks.

It is impossible for anyone entering this scene of mayhem not to be severely affected. Children were sheltered in the church's basement at the time of the blast. Later, that same day, a second Azerbaijani rocket struck, injuring two journalists documenting the damaged cathedral.

Viktor took me down the hill, first for a brief stop at a local mosque, fully intact and beautifully maintained by the Armenian community, yet somehow conveniently missed by Azerbaijan's rockets, which had already left their mark on all other residential neighborhoods in Artsakh including the nearby Shushi Cathedral.

In Stepanakert, we pulled up in front of several large blocks of apartments. Shattered glass was everywhere, the inside of people's homes completely exposed to the elements. Rounding the block, we climbed over heaps of bricks, twisted metal scraps, once parked automobiles. "Be careful," Viktor warned, "Pieces of these bombs don't always detonate immediately; some could be active."

"Two elderly people died in this blast; many were injured," Viktor mentioned,

"They were in their beds, sleeping, when the rockets struck."

Our final stop, again a residential neighborhood, had special significance to me. It is the location of a kindergarten I visited in February. An Azeri rocket obliterated houses across the street from the AMAA's Bagh-dikian Kindergarten, the AMAA office, and the Evangelical Church of Armenia (ECA) chapel. AMAA's property was not unscathed: The Kindergarten's windows had all shattered. I remember observing classes of four-year-old children in this building. I will never forget the words of one young mother we met on the very same steps, during my pre-war visit: "All of us want to send our children to the AMAA Kindergarten, because we know it provides the best education in Stepanakert." Down the hill from the Kindergarten, the door leading into the office was twisted and mangled, no longer possible to open, forcing us to climb through what was once its window. Viktor's office, tastefully decorated with a case of books to one side, had been exposed to the elements. Viktor reminisced with me about when we enjoyed a morning cup of coffee together here, back in February.

In another part of the building, we visited the ECA Chapel; shards of glass stuck from the window frames, pews overturned, all exposed to wind and rain.



*William Denk in front of the damaged Cathedral in Shushi.*



*Parents and their young children, exhausted after difficult and dangerous evacuations, gratefully enjoy a filling meal provided by The Maruks Project for Children.*



Back in Shushi, we spoke with elderly evacuees, sheltering in a basement. In two large rooms, mattresses covered the cold, damp stone floor. Anywhere in America, it would cause horror to see people in their 70s, 80s, and 90s staying in these conditions, but their only other option would have been certain death. Some are too old or sick to make the difficult journey by road out of Artsakh; others refuse to leave the only land they have ever known.

Despite their meager living space, they gave us the best Armenian hospitality, bringing coffee and insisting I eat sweets. One 73-year-old lady told me, "Most of us were evacuated from the same village, one of the first attacked by Azerbaijan. I was born there, as were my grandparents, and their grandparents. They are all still buried in the village cemetery. We just want to live our lives. We just want to go home."

An elderly man lying on a nearby mattress told us he is 86 years old and blind, but this was never a problem in his village, because everything was familiar. Another man explained that most of their children and grandchildren were on the frontlines, defending their homes and families. "I fought, defending our homes, now my son and grandson are defending Artsakh, too." All are very thankful to the AMAA and of course to AMAA's many generous benefactors for providing them with shelter and relief in the most difficult and painful times. These benefactors include:

- **MARUKS PROJECT FOR CHILDREN**, a Dutch non-profit organization, for their assistance to Artsakh families;
- **MAGYAR REFORMATUS SZERETETSZOLG LATALA-PITVANY** - Reformed Church of Hungary and Rev. Haroutune Selimian, President of the Armenian Evangelical Community of Syria, for arranging this humanitarian aid to help Artsakh families who already live in Armenia;
- **DEBRECENI REFORMATUS EGYHAZMEGYE** Debrecen Reformed Church of Hungary (Pastor Rev. Zsigmond Vad) for their assistance to AMAA's general projects in Artsakh;
- **EO Metterdaad**, a Dutch Christian Broadcast Company, **MISSION POSSIBLE NEDERLAND**, a Dutch Charity organization and Albert Dokter, Director of Mission Possible, for their assistance in renovating homes in Artsakh;



A home near Stepanakert hit twice during the final days of the war is under renovation.

- **Diaconie Protestantse Gemeente te Wageningen, Germany** and Rev. Serop Megerditchian, Pastor of the Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church of Pasadena, CA, for arranging this assistance to AMAA's general projects in Artsakh;
- **Rev. Gustav-Adolf-Werk of Evangelical Church in Leipzig, Germany** and Rev. Haroutune Selimian for arranging this assistance to renovate the damaged Church of Stepanakert; and
- **FRANTISEK BUBLIK ANTONINA SOCHORA** of Czech Republic, for his assistance to AMAA's general projects in Artsakh.

Regarding the involvement of Mission Possible in our post-war relief efforts in Artsakh, Albert Dokter reminisces: "End of September I received disturbing news about heavy bombings and attacks in different parts of Artsakh. I called several of my friends in Artsakh and Armenia and soon it became clear to me that this time the situation was bad, very bad. Emergency relief is not a core task of Mission Possible but when people are in dire need in the area where we work, we do our utmost best to support them. With our limited means we provided humanitarian aid to refugees. Through our contacts with the Christian Broadcast Company EO, we raised awareness and also additional funds in the Netherlands. I know AMAA already for many years as a committed and professional organization. With the extra funds we received we were happy to support the relief program of AMAA. The AMAA staff not only has an eye for the physical needs of the refugees, but also for

the spiritual needs. With their approach, they ease the fate of thousands of people. I hope and pray that these people's lives get back on track as soon as possible."

Referring to the MAGYAR REFORMATUS SZERETETSZOLG LATALA-PITVANY - Reformed Church of Hungary's aid, Ecumenical Officer Rev. Balázs Ódor said: "As a Church of the Reformation we strongly believe that if one member is suffering, the whole body is suffering. We cannot turn a blind eye to any community's hardship facing aggression, especially because of their belief. We have been in deep solidarity with the Armenian people, the Church and more closely in the past years with the Armenian Evangelical Community in Lebanon and Syria. In 2015, our Synod expressed this deep conviction and connection with Armenia in remembering the Armenian Genocide in a statement."

My last visit to Artsakh brought me again to Viktor's office in Stepanakert. The war had finally ended. AMAA employees were cleaning up broken glass in the damaged AMAA Chapel. Viktor was meeting with AMAA beneficiaries, young men now returned from the war, trying to repair their homes and resettle their families; this is a difficult task, but alleviated by the generous funds supplied by compassionate organizations. Now, as Armenian families return and try to rebuild their lives, they are incredibly grateful for all the help and humanity shown by their brothers and sisters in Hungary, Germany and the Netherlands. □

\* William Denk is a young American volunteer serving the AMAA in Armenia and Artsakh.

# The Significance of Shushi for Armenian Evangelicals

By Alina Balabanian\*

**A**s COVID-19 was ravaging across the globe and the United States was preoccupied with the presidential election, the world watched a ruthless, premeditated military attack launched by Azerbaijan, with the full support of Turkey and Syrian mercenaries, on the peaceful, civilian population of Artsakh on September 27, 2020.

As Armenians were once again facing an existential threat, a concurrent misinformation war was waged by Azerbaijan on the global stage. The historic presence of Armenians in Artsakh (Karabakh) was questioned and denied by Azerbaijan in order to substantiate their actions and claims. This, unfortunately, is nothing new. Since 1988, the Azeri position has maintained that "the Armenian population of Karabakh had only arrived there after 1828 and thus had no historical claims to the region."<sup>i</sup> History and primary sources, of course, tell a different story. Countless memoirs and works of "ancient and medieval, Greek, Roman, Arab, Persian, as well as early modern Russian, German, and English historians, geographers and travelers, placed Karabakh in historic Armenia."<sup>ii</sup>

But the Azeris have attempted to distort history to support their claims. For example, Azeri scholars attempted to alter a primary source on the early 19th century demography of Karabakh, the 1823 Russian Survey of the Karabakh Province. The survey (originally) reveals that Armenians were the vast majority in the land that later became known as Mountainous Karabakh: "In 1822, the Armenians formed 96.67% of the population of Mountainous Karabakh, while the Tatars formed the remaining 3.33%."<sup>iii</sup>

It is precisely before and during this time that the Armenian Evangelical movement was established in this region and began to make significant progress among the Armenian population in Shushi. The tremendous contributions and impact of the Armenian Evangelical presence in Artsakh gave momentum to its spread in Eastern Armenia.

In 1817, 1,500 German families left Wurtemberg and settled in the region of Kantsag (known today as Gangeh). By 1836, they had exposed the Armenians surrounding them to their Lutheran leanings and traditions.

The Missionary Society of Basel, Switzerland made a significant impact on Armenian Evangelicalism in Eastern Armenia and Artsakh. When missionaries August Dittrich and Felician Zarembo began their labors in Shushi in 1823, they identified a great need for academic and Biblical literacy among the population. They busied themselves to address this challenge and by 1827 the first public school in Shushi was opened welcoming all children, especially those living in difficult socioeconomic conditions. A rigorous academic curriculum was developed where children would learn mathematics, geography, Bible, Armenian, and even translation between classical and vernacular. These schools were highly sought after as there were not any other schools comparable to what they were offering in that vicinity. Taught by Armenian faculty, these schools were so exemplary that the government fol-

lowed their example to establish other public schools. By 1831, the missionaries were overseeing five schools operating in Shushi and its nearby villages. By doing so, they filled the education void that previously existed. These schools were attended by more Armenian pupils than Muslims. The spirit of evangelism beautifully weaved into the academic caliber of these schools and would impact generations for the years to come.

The missionaries also opened a printing press. The New Testament and various other publications were produced in the language of the people - the Eastern Armenian vernacular. Prior to the printing press, the Bible had only been available in Krapar (Classical Armenian) and the general population did not have easy access to it, nor did they understand it. A Children's Bible Storybook was the first publication in 1828. Religious tracts and books were produced, and this greatly helped spread the Armenian Evangelical movement into Eastern Armenia.

The missionaries found a God-sent, competent helper in a man named Mirza Faroukh. Mirza Faroukh, whose birth name was Harutyun Kaloustian, was born to Armenian parents in 1798 in one of Shushi's villages called Taghut. During the Russian-Persian war, he was taken into captivity along with several other young boys from his village. Harutyun was given to the Persian commander, Amirkhan Sardarin. Amirkhan gave the child to his sister who had recently lost a son. She renamed him Mirza Faroukh (after her son). During this time, he converted to Islam and no expense was spared in his education. Although he served



August Heinrich Dittrich



Felician Martin Von Zarembo



his master Amirkhan for years, he never forgot his roots. In 1826, Amirkhan was killed while leading the Persian army. Mirza Faroukh seized the opportunity to return to his birth parents and native village.<sup>iv</sup> Upon his return, he met missionaries Dittrich and Zarembo. He converted to Christianity and became their right-hand man in their endeavors to strengthen the evangelical Christian faith amongst the Armenians in Shushi and throughout the Caucasus. Mirza Faroukh would translate the New Testament from Persian to Turkish. His son was Rev. Apraham Amirkhanian who like his father, was very instrumental in strengthening the Armenian Evangelical presence, which extended as far as Shamakhi. The Armenian Evangelical Church in Shamakhi was a strong, vibrant, Christian community that upon hearing of those suffering from the famine in Van responded immediately by sending generous aid.<sup>v</sup>

The Armenian Evangelical movement in Eastern Armenia emphasized the importance of preaching, congregational singing and prayer meetings. They even had women's ministries as early as the 1880s. These elements are still very much alive in their Churches today. The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) and Evangelical Churches of Armenia (ECA) continue to minister to people's needs as they move forward despite having lost so much during the war. They continue to carry the mission forward in our ancestral homelands. Prior to the war, Shushi continued to be an important ministry center for the AMAA and ECA. Each summer, over 700-800 campers of all ages would attend Camp Bedrosian in Shushi where they were taught God's Word. It would also host conferences for pastoral training, youth, women and couples. The AMAA also continues to take care of orphans and offers daycare programs, "Shogh" centers, and various other social services throughout Armenia and Artsakh.

The Armenian Evangelicals in Shushi have now joined the members of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Stepanakert. Their Pastor is Rev. Khatchig Khatchatryan. They continue to be a vibrant congregation despite the traumatic events they underwent.

Our lands have been, and unfortunately, continue to be, "the theatre of perpetual war."<sup>vi</sup> Artsakh will always be a very special place for Armenian Evangelicals. Looking back at our heritage and history, the founders played their roles by remaining faithful to God in the midst of plagues, wars, opposition and hardship. In the 21st century, we, too, are facing similar trials and are called to play our roles by spreading the love of Christ and the hope He offers to a world that so desperately needs it. □

*\* Alina Balabanian is the Chair of the West Coast Armenian Evangelical Women's Fellowship.*

<sup>i</sup> George A. Bournoutian, *The 1923 Russian Survey of the Karabakh Province: A Primary Source on the Demography and Economy of Karabakh in the Early 19th Century* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, Inc., 2012), p. 432.

<sup>ii</sup> Bournoutian, p. 431.

<sup>iii</sup> Bournoutian, p. 439.

<sup>iv</sup> Garabed B. Adanian, *Hooshartzan Hay Avedaranaganatz Hev Avedaranagan Yegeghetzvoh (Monument to the Armenian Evangelicals and the Evangelical Church)* (Fresno: Crown Printing Co., 1952), p. 181-182.

<sup>v</sup> Ardashes Ghazaryan, René Léonian, *Evangelical Church of Armenia (Armenia-Caucasus)* (Yerevan, "Haygagan Hanrakidagan" Hradaragchootyoun, 1999), p. 79-113.

<sup>vi</sup> Eli Smith, Harrison George Ottis Dwight, *Missionary Researchers in Armenia: Including a Journey Through Asia Minor and into Georgia and Persia, With a Memoir on the Geography and Ancient History of Armenia* (London: G. Wightman, 1834), p. xiii.

## Meet Our Staff at AMAA

### Viktor Karapetyan, AMAA Artsakh Representative

**A**MAA Artsakh Representative Viktor Karapetyan has spent the past few decades of his full life in AMAA's large family. As a young boy, he participated in AMAA's Summer Camps and since then his life and activities have been rooted in the Association.

In 2003, after his graduation from high school, Viktor was accepted at Faculty of Law of Artsakh State University. Following his graduation with a master's degree, Viktor faithfully continued his service to the AMAA as leader of the Summer Camp Program. From 2008-2017 he was appointed Head of the Evangelical Church of Armenia's (ECA) Christian Education Department in Artsakh and in 2017 as Director of Camp Bedrosian in Shushi. Since 2005 Viktor served as leader of the Praise and Worship team of the ECA in Stepanakert and has co-authored several worship songs. Viktor continues to carry out his ministry in the Church, believing in his inseparable connection with God and in His significant impact on Viktor's life.

In 2018, Viktor was appointed as AMAA's Deputy Representative in Artsakh and placed in charge of its Shushi office. In 2019, taking into consideration the experience he accrued over the years serving the Association and the Church, he was appointed AMAA's Representative in Artsakh. Viktor continues to be educated and to expand his cognitive horizon, acquiring new professional skills and participating in training sessions both in Armenia and abroad. In addition to his busy schedule, Viktor is actively involved in sports and praising God as the driving force behind his life.

Viktor lives and acts based on 2 Timothy 1:12 "I know whom I have believed and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day." This has been the blessed driving force that has led Viktor throughout his life and his service to the AMAA.



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# The Christian Foundation of Artsakh

By Pastor Aram Babajanyan\*

**T**he name Artsakh is in the heart, mind and soul of every Armenian; it sounds different in the ears of our soul. Artsakh is the embodiment of our national, collective dream; it is a symbol of the spirit and power of the will of our people. Artsakh is also a result of our faith. Artsakh is one of the pillars of Armenian Christianity, one of the first fruits of that unique Christianity. It is also one of the impregnable and special fortresses of world Christianity.

Artsakh has always been the target of various conquerors and invaders. As in the past, now the invader, in this case the violent Turkish-Azerbaijani expansion, is trying to erase the millennial Armenian cultural and religious heritage from Artsakh and deny the pure Christian essence of Artsakh. Of course, it is impossible to hide or falsify history. The whole world knows about the rich and unique Armenian Christian heritage of Artsakh.

According to tradition, the Good News of the Gospel of Christ was brought to Armenia by the Apostles Bartholomew and Thaddeus. According to this same tradition, the preaching of the apostles also reached Artsakh. This land bears the footprints of the first Christian Witnesses and the early Christian stamp.

With the adoption of Christianity in Armenia as a state religion in 301, the land of Artsakh very quickly became a significant part of Armenian Christianity. Christian culture, thought and lifestyle began to take deep roots here. The construction of churches, monasteries and Christian sites gained momentum and continues to this day. There are about 5,000 registered Armenian cultural monuments throughout Artsakh, most of which are Christian. There are almost 100 monasteries and churches in Artsakh. Although construction of monasteries in Artsakh began in the 4th century, the first acquaintance with the list of churches and monasteries shows that the golden age of church construction in Artsakh was in the 12th-13th centuries, when Gandzasar and other pearls were erected. In this sense, the 17th century is also considered the Golden Age.

Here briefly are the main and most famous monasteries and churches of Artsakh. .

## Dadivank



Dadivank (9th-13th centuries) monastic complex, according to legend, was founded in the 1st century by Dade, one of the disciples of Thaddeus, an apostle of Christ. In 2007, during the excavations, the relics of St. Dade were found under the altar of one of the churches of the Monastery. This monastic complex, like other churches in Artsakh, has not functioned for about 100 years. About 8-10 years before the first Artsakh war, a large Kurdish family lived here and turned the Church into a barn. To keep warm, a fire was lit in the Church, and, as it turned out during the restoration work, the magnificent frescoes were covered with dirt. Fortunately, the Italian specialists were able to restore the frescoes. During the first Artsakh War, Azeri vandals even scratched the Armenian letters on the tombstones in the churchyard, erasing the historical trace.

## Gandzasar



Gandzasar Monastery complex dates to the 13th century. It got its name from its location, a hill, which has mines of silver and other metals. Gandzasar was the prelacy and the family graveyard of the Khachen princes. Thanks to the care of the rulers of the Hasan-Jalalyan dynasty, Gandzasar retained its role as a religious and educational center. The Monastery had a rich manuscript library, a school, where high-quality manuscripts were created, important figures were educated, who contributed to the development of the intellectual and cultural life of Khachen and the surrounding areas. The main church and the vestibule have been preserved. The Church of John the Baptist was built between 1216-1238 by Hasan Jalal-Dolan, the Prince of Nerkin Khachen. The courtyard was founded by Hasan and his wife Mamkan in 1261 and was completed by their son Atabak in 1266. The Monastery complex stands out with its rich architectural decoration. Gandzasar has not functioned since 1923, when the land of Artsakh was annexed to Azerbaijan. During the Artsakh liberation war, the Monastery was one of the main targets of the enemy. Traces of the bombing left over from the 90s can be seen on the walls of the Monastery. It was only possible to repair it during 1993-1997. It was restored in the 2000s.



## Amaras



According to Armenian historians, the Church of Amaras Monastery was founded by Gregory the Illuminator at the beginning of the 4th century. At the beginning of the 5th century, Mesrop Mashrots opened the first school in Artsakh in Amaras Monastery. In the second quarter of the 19th century, the Amaras Monastery complex, which had a rather strong defense system built in the 17th century, was used as a fortress, and from 1832 to 1847 it served as a customs house on the Russian-Persian border. In 1848, the Monastery was handed over to the metropolitan of Gandzasar Baghdasar. The dilapidated Church was restored in 1858 with the help of Armenians of Shushi. During the first Artsakh war, five shells hit the complex, two of which damaged the windows and the other three damaged the cross. The walls of the complex were also damaged. Restoration work began in 2009.

## Tsitsernavank



Tsitsernavank Monastery/Church was founded in the 4th century. The Monastery has a valuable role not only for Armenia but for the whole Christian world. The "tsitsern" (the little finger) of the Apostle Peter is kept in the Monastery. From here is the name "Tsitsernavank." The current Tsitsernavank is under the influence of several construction phases. According to some opinions, Tsitsernavank was originally a pagan temple, which was converted into a church after the conversion to Christianity. An important feature of the Tsitsernavank basilica is that it has no entrance on the western front, which is typical of pagan temples, it is not typical of basilica

churches. The arched hall above the altar, the lack of windows on the stage, and the absence of vaulted arches, are unique and very rare features in Armenian architectural tradition. Tsitsernavank prospered in the 17th and 18th centuries, when the refectory, courtroom and protecting walls were built with a large arched gate (1633), on the south side. The Church was also renovated in 1779. It was a popular place for pilgrimage, where thousands of pilgrims from all over Syunik and Artsakh visited during the Feast of the Ascension. The road leading to Tsitsernavank passes through a very beautiful and interesting canyon. Before the liberation of Artsakh, Tsitsernavank was turned into a barn by the Azerbaijanis and the floor was completely demolished. The restoration work and reconsecration of Tsitsernavank were carried out in 2001.

## Jrvshtik



The Monastery of St. Yeghishe (Jrvshtik) was founded in the 5th century by King Vachagan the Pious. It is located north of the village of Mataghis in the Martakert region, near the border line of contact, on the forested slope of Mount Mrav. On the site of the Monastery there was a pagan shrine named Mihr Nersehia. In the early Middle Ages, Jrvshtik Monastery, being a sacred pilgrimage site of historical Artsakh, was closely connected with Ghelo Monastery and with the close religious and political centers. The relics of St. Yeghishe were buried here. The tomb of King Vachagan the Pious, and the resting place of the 18th century Jraber Prince Melik Adam are located in the territory of the Monastery. It is supposed that the Monastery complex was named after St. Yeghishe, when his relics were moved here from Horeka Monastery. The Monastery complex consists of a church, vestibule, seven chapels, a cemetery and other auxiliary buildings, which were built over the 13th to the 18th centuries. In the Middle Ages, important secular and religious documents, manuscripts and church utensils were kept in Jrvshtik Monastery. The Monastery was a center of education and writing. Many valuable manuscripts were copied here. In the 18th century, Jrvshtik Monastery was one of the centers of the Armenian national liberation movements.

As we have already mentioned, the list of monasteries and churches in Artsakh is very large, all of them are unique and are jewels of Armenian Christian culture.

Artsakh is Christian in its essence; it will remain Armenian and Christian. □

*\* Badveli Aram Babajanyan is the Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Gyumri.*



## EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF ARMENIA STEPANAKERT, ARTSAKH

**I**n the beginning it was a group, but in the course of time it became a community with a serving Church – a stable, growing church," said Rev. Aram Mkrtchyan, the Church's first Pastor speaking about the formation of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Stepanakert, Artsakh.

After the collapse of the restrictive and oppressive regimes of the Soviet-era, awakening steps were taken cautiously, both throughout Armenia and in Artsakh Republic. In post-war Artsakh, the activities of the Armenian Missionary Association of America were of great importance in the charitable, caring and cultural spheres, with the goal of spreading the Good News through their patriotic work. A vivid example of this was the camps set up in 1996 near the Gargar River, which were attended by more than 2,000 children over three years.

It was during this period that the Evangelical Church of Armenia, acquired its own church building in 1997, and in 2009 was officially registered as a Church. To this day, despite the difficulties, the Church community is flourishing, with three successive pastors serving the Church—Rev. Aram Mkrtchyan (2001-2018), Rev. Vardan Apinyan (2018-2020) and since 2020 Pastor Khachatur Khachatryan.

"Our goal was to spread the Good News, to form the Church, to provide high quality services and to train leaders," said Rev. Mkrtchyan, former Pastor of the Church.

In the course of establishing a stable church, not only Sunday morning Worship services are held, but also Christian education programs. Besides the Sunday worship services in the Stepanakert Church, children's and youth programs are held in Stepanakert and Askeran on a weekly basis.

Christian Education programs were also provided in Shushi. The 2020 Youth Conference at Camp Bedrosian from September 11-13 was the last one in Shushi, now outside the control of Artsakh Republic. Only 14 days later, on September 27, the war broke out, along with a "dry period" for Artsakh as well as for its people and the Church community. In those days, Rev. Apinyan, Pastor of the Stepanakert Church, moved members of the community to a safer area in Armenia. AMAA's Artsakh Representative Viktor Karapetyan aided those who stayed in Artsakh, while the Armenian Evangelical Church in the Motherland stayed strong in organizational matters and was fighting with prayer.



*Rev. Albert Paytyan, President of the Union of the Evangelical Church of Armenia, installs Pastor Khachatur Khachatryan as the Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Stepanakert.*

"I provided food, basic necessities, medicine and the Bible. People needed hope more than anything else, which they could find only in God," reminisces Mr. Karapetyan. "During the war, the faith of the people became more and more emphasized. During my visits when I gave them Bibles, I noticed that most of them were already reading the Bible," he said.



*First post-war prayer time at Stepanakert Church.*



Exactly 44 days later, on November 10, the hostilities ended, but it will take a long time to heal the physical damage caused during the days of the war. On November 15, a few pastors and staff members of the Evangelical Church of Armenia and AMAA Armenia came to Artsakh to support the Homeland of Artsakh and the members of the community with their presence, as well as to start restoration work.

The first post-war Worship service was held on November 22 led by Rev. Hovhannes Hovsepyan and Rev. Avetik Khachatryan from Yerevan. The next two weeks the services were alternated between Rev. Gevorg Gasparyan and Pastor Suren Makaryan, followed by Pastor Arman Martirosyan and Mher Sharbatyan, as well as by some staff members of Christian Education Department of the Evangelical Church of Armenia.

After the end of the war, on December 13, Pastor Khachatryan was appointed and installed for the Stepanakert Church as its new Minister, who, with the help of the community will take steps and will try to realize God's vision for the future of the Church. Currently the Sunday Worship services have resumed in Stepanakert, as well as men's and women's study Bible groups, Christian Education Programs, and Youth programs for children in Askeran.



*Covering the damaged roof of Stepanakert Church and AMAA office to protect them from the rain.*



*The Youth of Stepanakert Church gather for their first post-war Bible Study.*



*Stepanakert Church members gather for their first post-war Bible Study and prayers with Rev. Hovhannes Hovsepyan and Rev. Avetik Khachatryan.*

"Now and always, the Church must glorify God. There have been wars and there will be wars, but apart from that, we must keep in touch with God. We have set a goal to reach people who are deeply disturbed in this war, and convey to them the comforting power of God," says current Pastor Khachatryan. □

*(Translated from Eastern Armenian by Louisa Janbazian)*



*Some of the members of Stepanakert Church.*





# AMAA Spreads the Good News of Christmas to the Children of Armenia and Artsakh

*Christmas celebration in Stepanakert with Viktor Karapetyan, AMAA Artsakh Representative.*

**Christ is born** is not just the Good News with which Christians greet each other once a year, but it's a fact that Christ was born to save us from sin and eternal death and reconcile us with God the Father. Jesus was born so that our hope will never fade.

During the first weeks of 2021, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) in cooperation with the Evangelical Church of Armenia (ECA) delivered this message of hope to over 15,600 children, adolescents and their parents during more than 100 Christmas Programs held in 45 towns and villages throughout Armenia and Artsakh. Along with the Good News, over 12,000 children received Christmas Joy packages filled with stationery, educational games, hygiene items and warm hats that were prepared in advance by volunteers from the AMAA and ECA.

This year, the AMAA's and ECA's "Hayasa" Theatrical group, led by Artistic Director Nune Abrahamyan, conveyed the Good News of Christmas to the children with a puppet show based on Oscar Wilde's "Selfish Giant" story. The icy heart of the "selfish giant" melts, and his garden turns green again when he hears the Gospel of Salvation. The troupe started its tour and performances from the AMAA's Shoghig Camp in Hankavan, where several fami-



*Christmas celebration at Camp Shoghig in Hankavan.*

lies from Artsakh had taken refuge since the first days of the war, and later with families who lost their homes in Shushi and Hadrut regions. The children who attended school in the Pyunik village of Hankavan, where the Artsakh children who were staying at camp attend, were also invited to the event.



*Christmas celebration in Ijevan.*



*Christmas celebration in Border villages.*



*Christmas celebration in Stepanavan.*



Following the Christmas Program in Camp Shoghig, the "Hayasa" Theatrical group also presented their program in Yerevan, Stepanavan and the neighboring villages. Children and teenagers from Artsakh families who had taken refuge in these regions were also invited to attend. During these 10 performances the message of the best way to become better echoed the birth of Jesus Christ in our hearts.

After the war, words such as *dream, rejoice and laugh* might sound strange, especially to the children of Artsakh, where joy seemed to be hidden in their eyes. Many of these children dream to return home, but for the time being it is an unattainable dream. "Return to Home" was the theme of another Christmas theatrical performance presented to the children in Gyumri and later in Artsakh led by Artistic Director Vazken Torosyan.

In Artsakh, from January 8-11, the Gyumri theatrical group presented a Christmas Program in Stepanakert, Askeran, Martakert and other regions of the area. During seven sessions and from various stages, about 3,000 children watched a musical performance which told the story of a little girl who always complained about her family. She lied and wanted to get away from home. Because of her lies no one trusted her anymore and she lost everything. Finally she found herself in the realm of dreams, whose king is the King of Kings. It is the prayer to Him that changed the girl's heart and helped her understand that the most precious thing in life is her family, and only the King can fulfill her dreams, which are good by His will and will come true at the right time. The message from this performance was a ray of hope especially for the children and their parents who lost their homes in Shushi and Hadrut.

Besides the major cities and towns in Armenia, this year the AMAA's and ECA's Vardenis team conveyed the Good News of Christmas not only in Vardenis, a border village of Armenia, but also to 20 other nearby villages. In just a few days, despite the harsh snowy weather, the team visited these villages and presented the story of Jesus' Nativity and distributed Christmas Joy packages.

We thank all our donors and supporters for helping spread the Christmas message and distribute 12,000 Christmas Joy packages to the children of Armenia and Artsakh. □



*Christmas celebration in Yerevan.*



*Christmas celebration in Ayntap.*



*Christmas celebration in Ayntap.*



*Christmas celebration in Gyumri.*



**A Letter of Appreciation from Artsakh Republic President Arayik Harutyunyan to the AMAA, for the support provided to the servicemen and civilians of Artsakh during the war and for all the post-war humanitarian efforts**



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**Ա.ՀԱՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՅԱՆ**

Ստեփանակերտ, 19 հունվարի, 2021 թ.



# Resurrection

By Pastor Aram Babajanyan\*

**W**e entered 2021 and with this a new era has started and a new page has turned in our nation's history. We are all facing unusual and difficult times and deep crisis. These days we are living in one of the most difficult and serious periods for our nation, our people and for both Armenian states. We have many challenges and growing dangers in front of us that seem impossible to overcome. Our national, state and collective loss is indescribably great, and the pain of this loss is unspeakable.

We all feel the bitterness of defeat, destruction and the loss of thousands of our sons in our hearts, minds and souls. Our dream, nurtured for decades and even centuries that seemed to be coming true, has collapsed and crashed. And in all this we can think there is no way out of this situation, everything is over. Objectively or subjectively, many of us may not even find the strength to see the future.

It is here, in this uncertain and shaky moment, that God has something to say to us through the mouth of one of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament. The 37th chapter of the prophecy of Ezekiel draws the vision of dry bones and the valley of death. This vision represents the cruelest, hardest and most crucial period in the history and course of God's people - the Babylonian exile. It was during this period that Israel seemed to be irretrievably lost and dispersed. This was the valley of the dry and lifeless bones of the people of God.

But the main message of the vision is about the essence and power of God who revealed Himself in Christ. God, by His life-giving and resurrecting power, gathers and raises the dry bones of His people scattered in the wilderness. He covers His dead people with flesh and blood. He raises them up from the ashes and strengthens the nation called by His name.

The basis of the Gospel of Christ and Christianity itself is the Resurrection. And we are the first Christian nation and country who are called by His name. This means that the reality of the Resurrection, the new life, the rebirth and the hope is in our souls, hearts and minds. God, who revived His people in captivity in Babylon, is still the same God today. And now it is a great consolation and encouragement for us to realize that the God of Resurrection is able to revive us as a nation and as a country. He can lift us up and send us in a new direction.

But here one must deeply realize that the people called by His name have a path to pass, and this path is not easy. Now is the time for our deep self-examination and confession. Yes, we must truly love one another in action and in truth. Now is the time to lick our wounds, to eat dust and ashes, now is the time to put on our sackcloth.

We must look deep down to our hearts in an honest and realistic way and see our own flaws, sins, weaknesses, failures, shortcomings and mistakes. We are called to confess them with our broken hearts and with our cold heads before God and ourselves and before each other.

It is only after this that we will see the reality of our true Resurrection granted by God. It is only after this that we will change with the wisdom of God. We will change qualitatively and we will grow, develop and become stronger. Only in this case we will bring back what we lost and even more.

Our God is a resurrecting and reviving God in Christ. □



\* Badveli Aram Babajanyan is the Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Gyumri.

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# Armenian Evangelicals to Celebrate 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Armenia



By **Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian**, AEWG Executive Director

**J**uly 1, 2021 is the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Armenian Evangelical Church. The Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC) has appointed an anniversary steering Committee to mark this milestone in Armenia from June 25 to July 6, 2021. The Committee consists of the following: Zaven Khanjian, Chairman; Harout Nercessian, Secretary; Nerses Rastgelenanian, Treasurer. The other Committee members are: Reverends Joel Mikaelian, Berdj Djambazian, René Léonian, Raffi Messerlian, Hovhanness Hovsepian, Vahan Tootikian and Joyce Philibosian Stein.

The theme of the celebration is "Holding Fast the Profession of our Faith." The Biblical verse is: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for He is faithful that promised" (Hebrews 10:23).

The 175th Anniversary Committee is at work since February, 2020 to plan the details of the Anniversary celebrations, which includes the following:

1. **An All-Armenian Evangelical Youth Conference, June 26-July 7.**
2. **An Anniversary public celebration on July 1, to be held at Aram Khachatouryan Concert Hall.**
3. **A gathering of Armenian Evangelical lay and spiritual leadership meeting, July 2.**
4. **The dedication of the AMAA Stepanavan Center, July 4.**
5. **A publication of a Commemorative Volume dealing with the Armenian Evangelical Church in General, and the seven-member Church Unions and Organizations of the Armenian Evangelical World Council.**

The 175th Anniversary is an appropriate time to pay tribute to the memory of the pioneers, and salute those who followed in the footsteps of the "founding fathers" who kept the torch of faith burning. It is also an appropriate time to renew our dedication and be challenged to venture for greater accomplishments.

The 175 year legacy of the Armenian Evangelical Church (AEC) is a rich one. It has a great heritage, and its benefits and contributions to the Armenian nation have been manifold in the religious, educational, social, political, philanthropic and leadership areas. The following are but a few of those accomplishments. AEC created a revival of spiritual values among the Armenian people. It translated and popularized the Bible in the language of the people. It placed a great emphasis on Christian education through its Church schools, youth organizations and Christian camps. It developed a sound educational network ranging from kindergarten to university, and educated thousands of Armenians. It established many philanthropic and missionary institutions which served as Good Samaritans to countless people. It contributed to the enhancement of the Armenian culture through its publications, news media and programs. It gave the Armenian nation many great individuals who provided leadership to the nation. It became a pioneer in the 20th century ecumenical movement. And, there is so much more.

On this 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, as we thank God for these accomplishments, we realize that some of AEC's ideals are in danger of being tarnished and some of its followers' loyalties are growing dim. The future places some challenges before us. We must recover the zeal of our forefathers for evangelism. The AEC was born of evangelism and for evangelizing. We should continue to emphasize the importance of one's personal relationship with Christ. We need to inspire our members to lead reformed and changed lives according to the teachings of the Bible, to preserve and perpetuate our Armenian heritage, to make our churches witnessing communities of faith, and to prepare competent and spiritual leadership. On the national level, the AEC should continue its moral and financial support to the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh, to strengthen them spiritually, economically, politically and socially, and help the displaced Armenians both in Artsakh and the Middle East.

The AEC should become a dynamic, witnessing community relating faith to all areas of life through ministry, work, deed and lifestyle. It should embody, interpret and communicate Armenian Christendom in its spiritual and cultural dimension.

The 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the AEC will hopefully be a time not only to recall the past, but also an occasion to meet the challenges of the future. □



# RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT OF CAMP ARMEN, WHERE HRANT DINK WAS RAISED, PAVES ITS WAY



**T**he Armenian Orphanage, also known as Camp Armen, in Tuzla, Istanbul, where Agos Newspaper Editor-in-Chief and journalist Hrant Dink grew up, received unanimous approval from the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM) Council, hereby removing all zoning obstacles to rebuild the Camp by the Gedikpaşa Armenian Protestant Church and School Foundation.

The Camp, which was inactive, faced the danger of demolition in 2015, due to the fact that the Title Deeds were not returned to the Foundation for years. During the time of resistance, the Camp was guarded for days.

On October 27, 2015 the issue was resolved, when the original ownership of the title deed was returned to Gedikpaşa Armenian Protestant Church and School Foundation.

In December 2017, the IMM Council removed the "administrative facility" annotation from the parcel and declared it a "social cultural area." Steps were then taken for the reconstruction of Camp Armen.

In its session, on January 14, 2021, the IMM Council once again, changed the zoning of the 4,715 square meter parcel.

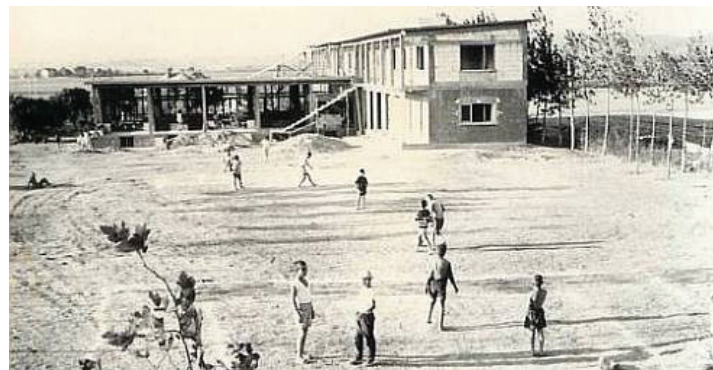
Unanimously, the function of the parcel as a "social cultural area" was changed to "special social cultural area." With this change, the front of the building that will be con-



*Camp Armen under the leadership of Hrant and Rakel Dink (standing left in the back).*

structed by the Foundation will be completely open and not excluded from the use of the public. Facilities such as a public education center, social aid units, dormitory, nursing home, and homes for the handicapped will be built on the land. □

*(Translated from Turkish by Louisa Janbazian)*



## CORRECTION

Oct/Nov/Dec 2020 AMAA News

Page 7 – The Miracle of Haigazian University History by Rev. Dr. John Khanjian. Second column first paragraph, line 10 after the word Headmaster it should read: Key founding donors of Haigazian University were Avak Stephen Mehagian and his wife Mary Mehagian, Dr. Armenag Haigazian's oldest daughter. The Digital copy of the AMAA News posted on our website reflects the correction.

**We apologize for the error!**

# AMAA's Critical Support Following Beirut Massive Explosions

By Razmig Kaprielian\*

**O**n August 4, 2020, two large explosions hit the Beirut Port surrounded by heavily populated urban neighborhoods, including Armenian sections. The blasts rocked the entire city and much of the country, shaking buildings, infrastructures, and thousands of homes, schools and institutions all over Beirut causing an estimated 15 billion USD worth of property damage.

As an active and present community in Beirut, the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE) also sustained huge property damage because of the blast and felt itself in need of major support to rehabilitate its Headquarters and all other affected properties it operates. Those that were damaged or impacted due to the explosions were:

- UAECNE Headquarters, Jeitawi
- Haigazian University, Beirut
- Armenian Evangelical First Church, Beirut
- Armenian Evangelical College, Beirut
- Armenian Evangelical Church, Ashrafieh
- Armenian Evangelical Central High School, Ashrafieh
- Armenian Evangelical Church, Nor Marash
- Armenian Evangelical Shamlan Tatigian School, Bourj Hammoud
- Armenian Evangelical Torosian School, Nor Amanos
- The Trad Building of the Social Action Committee, Trad
- The Gertmenian and Petania Buildings, Nor Hadjin
- Residences of several pastors residing in the Beirut area.

While many international partners reached out and helped, the AMAA leadership showed immediate and generous moral

and financial support to the UAECNE community from the first moment of the explosions and was the first to provide needed financial support to renovate and rehabilitate lives and operations. Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, Chair of the UAECNE Central Committee and President of Haigazian University, commented, "We all know how significant the input and support of the AMAA has been since 1918, but there are times such as the August 4 explosions when the AMAA's input made a rapid and substantial difference in mending the brokenness of walls, windows and spirits."

The AMAA's financial support for rebuilding was approximately 375,000 USD and was highly essential to the community. Without this support the UAECNE would not have been able to reconstruct most of its properties within a short period of time and regain its core activities through its institutions and centers that share a responsibility for strengthening relationships with church members, spiritual life, education, social and humanitarian work and youth engagement.

Beside the Union Headquarters and the UAECNE churches, this support was a concrete way of supporting 900 students and 300 beneficiaries of the Social Action Committee. One of the



*Armenian Evangelical Central High School of Ashrafieh before and after the explosions.*



*Installation of new windows at the Armenian Evangelical College in Beirut.*





*The reading room at the Derian Armenological Library of Haigazian University before and after the explosions.*

CHS teachers expressed her appreciation for witnessing a quick rehabilitation of the School by saying, "We really appreciate the generous donation received, which made our kindergarten colorful again. A new life has been breathed into our School. Everything now is rebuilt and fixed. We are happy that the School is ready to host the students once the COVID-19 pandemic is contained."

Even beyond supporting the construction work and sustaining the needy families who were affected by the explosions, the AMAA provided additional funds to the Armenian Evangelical Social Center in Beirut, which gave the SAC staff the ability to go beyond its previous programs and level of help to the families during these tough times. Director of the Center Lena Danaoghlian said, "AMAA's extra support helped us reach out to more families



*The entry room of the headquarters of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East before and after the explosions.*

than usual. The Armenian families who were affected by the explosions received generous contributions especially rehabilitation and trauma therapy." One of the recipients and a mother of four children expressed her gratitude by thanking the food voucher received from SAC, "Thank you for people who supported me and my children during these tough times and helped us secure food. How would we have secured food without this support?"

UAECNE appreciates the permanent support of the AMAA, especially during these difficult times, and appreciates the trust in the values, beliefs and the mission of UAECNE which has been in service of God and through the Armenian Evangelical community in Lebanon to the wider Armenian society for almost a century now. □

*\* Razmig Kaprielian is the Student Life Director of Haigazian University and Accountant for the Social Action Committee.*



*Clean up and renovations at the Armenian Evangelical Shamlian Tatigian School in Bourj Hammoud.*



*Volunteers at Social Service Center in Trad prepare packages of relief supplies for needy families.*

# AMAA Now Accepting Scholarship Applications

**T**he Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) is now accepting applications for the 2021-2022 academic year for full-time undergraduate students of Armenian descent studying in North America.

Students interested in applying for scholarships should personally request the Link for the Application Form by calling 201-265-2607 or by email, [sponsorship@amaa.org](mailto:sponsorship@amaa.org). Previous recipients must reapply each year. It is the responsibility of the student to request an application form.

Incomplete items and/ or missing documents will automatically disqualify an applicant.

All application forms must be completed online, and submitted no later than **May 1, 2021**.

Awards are made by the Scholarship Committee, which takes into consideration the applicant's grades, financial need, the tuition cost of the college he/she will attend, accomplishments, future leadership potential and good character references. Please note, Scholarship Grant checks are issued directly to academic Institutions and not individuals.

## JAMES G. JAMESON ESSAY CONTEST

OPEN TO HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

**T**he James G. Jameson Essay Contest, sponsored by the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), runs every academic year and is financed from the income of a special fund established by Mr. and Mrs. James G. Jameson of Brookline, MA.

All Armenian and part-Armenian students attending schools in North America are eligible. Only unpublished essays are accepted which are written in English and have a length of 1,000 to 2,000 words.

The topics of the Contest are required to touch upon some aspect of Armenian heritage and experience, such as religion, history, culture, literature, language, art, architecture, geography, and economics.

Essays are judged on the basis of merit in such criteria as content, style, logic and reasoning, coherence, and usage.

Awards for the Contest are made in two categories: College/University contestants, and High School contestants.

The deadline for entries is **May 1, 2021**.

Entries and/or inquiries should be directed to: James G. Jameson Essay Contest, c/o of The Armenian Missionary Association of America, 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652.





## Արցախեան 44օրեայ Պատերազմը Մեր Յանձնառութիւնը

## Խտացնել Քրիստոնեայ Արցախի Բնակչութիւնը

**Հողը կը յուշէ պատմութիւնը  
բայց ժողովուրդն է որ կը բնորոշէ անոր ինքնութիւնը:**

Չաւեն Խանճեան, Գործադիր Տնօրէն

**Ա**յդպէս նախատեսուած չէր: Բայց մենք ծանօթ ենք **«Քանզի իմ խորհուրդներս ձեր խորհուրդները չեն, ու ձեր ճամբաները իմ ճամբաներս չեն»:** Եսայի 55. 8

Երկու Հազար Քսանը Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան Արցախեան ծառայութեան քսանհինգ ամեակն էր: Բովանդակալից հանդիսութիւններ ծրագրուած էր Շուշիի եւ Ստեփանակերտի մէջ: Ստուար խնդակիցներ ապահոված էին իրենց երթեւեկը միանալու Աւետարանչականի ընտանիքին մասնակցելու յատուկ պաշտամունքի մը, Պետրոսեան ճամբարի մասնաշէնքի նաւակատիքին, մշակութային ձեռնարկներու, թատրոնի մը ներկայացման եւ նշանակալից ու յիշատակալից պաշտօնական ընթրիքի մը ծրագրուած Արցախի մշակութային կեդրոն՝ Շուշիի մէջ:

Աստուած տարբեր ծրագիր ուներ մեր ժողովուրդին համար:

Աննախադէպ տարի մը ձգած ենք մեր ետին որու մտաբերումը կը փշաքաղէ ամէն հայու հոգին երկրագունդի վրայ: Թագաժահիրը, տագնապներու անդադրում օղակը Սուրիոյ եւ Լիբանանի մէջ, Օգոստոսեան ահաւոր պայթումը Պէյրութի մէջ, խայթող յուշեր են որոնց մղձաւանջը երկար պիտի հետապնդէ մեզ:

Արցախեան պատերազմի աղետալի արդիւնքը սակայն յեղաշրջեց բոլորը: Ազգ մը ամբողջ կ'ողբայ հայրենիքի համար զոհուած իր հազարաւոր զաւակները, որու անկախութեան համար սերունդներ իրենց կեանքը զոհած էին անցեալին: Ազգ մը ամբողջ կ'ողբայ հազարաւոր սրտաբեկ մայրեր, հազիւ գարուն տեսնող որբեւայրի հարսեր որոնց տոհմածառերու սահմանաբակ աճը ապացոյցն են կացինահար ճիւղերու պատմութեան՝ զոհը Նոյն ոճրագործին: Ազգ մը ամբողջ կ'ողբայ կորուստը հազարամեայ պապենական հողերու, որու վրայ ցանուած յուշարձաններու հոյլը վկայութիւնն է անոր հարուստ քրիստոնեական ժառանգութեան:

Մեզ դիմագրաւող մարտահրաւերները լերնակուտակ են մինչ քաղաքական եւ պետական ղեկավարութիւն մը կը պայքարի ապագայի հուն մը ճեղքել անհամար անորոշութիւններու ընդմէջ:

Արդարօրէն պատասխաններ կը փնտռուին երեսուն տարուայ անվտանգութեան, պաշտպանութեան եւ դիւանագիտական անփառունակ ձախողութիւններու համար: Խոր ցաւի, վիշտի եւ լուրջ մտահոգութեան մթնոլորտի մը մէջ, ժողովրդային եւ հասարակական միտքը Սփիւռքի եւ Հայաստանի մէջ կը քանայ գիտակցիլ Նոր իրավիճակի մը գոյութեան, վերաչափել ապագայի ակնկալութիւնները եւ հունաւորել Նոր ճանապարհ մը:

Աստուած ունի բոլոր դժուարութիւններու պատասխանը: Երբ աշակերտները տատանուող նաւուն վրայ սարսափած արթնցուցին Յիսուս գիրենք փրկելու համար, Ան ըսաւ «Թերահաւատներ, ինչո՞ւ այդպէս երկչոտ էք» Մատթեոս 8. 26 «...ու մեծ հանդարտութիւն մը տիրեց»:

Նոյեմբեր 10ի յայտարարութեամբ, երբ բոլոր ռազմական գործողութիւնները դադրեցան, Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութիւնը արդէն գիտակից էր իր յանձնառութեան: **Խրախուսել եւ օժանդակել Արցախի ժողովուրդի վերաբնակեցումը իր հարազատ հողին վրայ եւ վերականգնել Աւետարանչականի ամբողջական գործողութիւնները Արցախի մէջ:** Ընկերակցութեան ներկայացուցիչները պատասխանատուութեան ամբողջական գիտակցութեամբ պատնէշի վրայ էին: Մի քանի օրուայ ընթացքին Ստեփանակերտի Աւետարանչականի եւ



Պատերազմի զինադադարէն ետք  
Հայաստանէն տուն՝ Արցախ վերադարձող  
աղջնակ մը:

Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ գրասենեակները բաց էին: Աշխատակազմը վերադարձած էր եւ Դեկտեմբեր 1ին Ասկերանի, Մարտակերտի եւ Ստեփանակերտի մէջ լրիւ կը գործէին Աւետարանչականի բոլոր ծրագիրները:

Պատմական Հայաստանի տարածքը հարազատ տուն է Քրիստոնեական եւ ազգային կոթողային հսկայ ժառանգութեան մը: Բայց հողը զուրկ է բռնութեամբ տեղահանուած եւ ոչնչացուած իր բնիկ ժողովուրդէն: **Հողը անտարակոյս կը յուշէ տարածքին պատմութիւնը բայց ժողովուրդն է որ կը բնորոշէ անոր ինքնութիւնը: Քրիստոնեական եւ հայկական ինքնութիւն ունեցող Արցախեան հողը եթէ պիտի փրկուի հարկ է խտացնել անոր վրայ բնակող ժողովուրդի շարքերը:**

Յառաջիկայ տարիներուն մինչ պետութիւն եւ իշխանութիւն կը տքնին շահելու Արցախեան տարածքի եւ բնակչութեան ինքնորոշման իրաւունքը, Աւետարանչականը հաւատքով, վճռակամութեամբ եւ բարի կամեցողութեամբ պիտի սատարէ եւ օժանդակէ ժողովուրդի բարօրութեան, փարի հողին, զարգացնէ եւ ծաղկեցնէ զայն հետապնդելով ժողովուրդի երջանկութիւնը:

Աւետարանչականի 25ամեայ հոգեւոր, կրթական եւ մարդասիրական ծրագիրներն ու ծառայութիւնները օրինութիւն եղած են բազմաթիւ Արցախցի մանուկներու կեանքին: Յետ պատերազմեան կարիքները բազմապատկած են մեր ջանքերը ամփելու ցաւը, մեղմելու հոգեկան ցնցումը եւ դաստիարակելու ստեղծագործ եւ նորարար սերունդ մը:

**AMAA News-ի այս թիւը նուիրուած է Արցախին եւ անոր ժողովուրդին:** Աւետարանչականի նուիրումը Արցախի ժողովուրդին անժամանակ է իսկ նուիրումը Աստուծոյ սիրոյն արտացոլացումը: Այդ նաեւ յարգանքի տուրք է անոնց՝ որոնք ծանօթ ըլլալով Շուշիի մէջ տասնամեակներու յիշատակելի ծառայութեան ժառանգութեան կորուստին՝ գաւթիչներու ոտնահարող ոտքերուն ներքեւ, գորովագին հարց տուին.- «Կրնա՞նք վերականգնել զայն Ստեփանակերտի մէջ»:

Այո, կրնա՞նք եւ պիտի վերականգնենք:

Շնորհակալութիւն Արցախի մեր եղբայրներուն եւ քոյրերուն օգնութեան մեր ջանքերուն՝ ձեր աջակցութեան համար: □

Փետրուար 5, 2021

## ՆԱՅԵԼՈՎ ՊԱՏԵՐԱԶՄԻ ԱԶՔԵՐԻ ՄԷՋ...

### Վիկտոր Կարապետյան\*

Նայեցի պատերազմի աչքերի մէջ. այնտեղ սարսափ կար Աստծո և մարդու հանդէպ: Պատերազմը դժոխք է, որի մէջ հայտնված Աստծո զավակները պետք է ձգտեն այդ խավարի մէջ լույս բերել, անհույսներին՝ հուսադրել, մահվան ճիրաններում՝ ապրեցնել, կշտացնել, եթէ անգամ խոսքով: Անիծված պատերազմը աչքերը փախցնում է, բայց ամենուր իր այլանդակ հետքերն է թողում:

Հայացքս հառում եմ մի կետի, աչքերս փակում ու... Վերապրում դժոխային 45 օրերը: Սկսում եմ չհավատալ մղձավանջին. միթե՞ հնարավոր է, այդ ե՞ս էի. Նկուղից նկուղ՝ պայթող արկերից շուտ հասնելու ակնկալիքով հասցնում եմ սնունդ և առաջին անհրաժեշտության պարագաներ, իսկ նկուղի բնակիչը իր որդուն է սպասում, առաջարկում է դռնից ներս գալ, առաջանալ, որ որդին էլ մտնի, դրսում չմնա. քիչ անց արդեն բռնանում է՝ պահանջելով ինձնից իր զավակին: Ու հասկանում եմ, որ սննդից առավել այդ նկուղ հույս

է պետք տանել, սիրով կիսվել, մխիթարանքի խոսքեր փոխանցել, աչքերի մէջ նայել, եթէ անհնար է անգամ:

Չինվորական հոսպիտալ այցի հերթական օրն է: Ամեն փշրված ապակուց արնահոսում է մարմինս ներսից, անկարող եմ դառնում նույնիսկ մտածելու: Հերթական զինվոր եղբոր սառած ձեռքերն եմ ծալում, վերջին համբույրը թողնում արնաշաղաղ ճակատին: Ամենուր սպիտակ սավաններ, մոռացված գույնի պատեր:

Ինձ այնպես է թվում, որ չեմ քայլում, սողալով ձգվում եմ դեպի առաջինը, երկրորդը, հիմունքորդը: Հատակը չեմ շոշափում, հատակը մեծ մահճակալ է դարձել և այդ անվերջանալի թվացող մահճակալին, կողք կողքի իմ զինվոր եղբայրներն են: Այցելում եմ հերթական վիրավոր զինվորին. անգիտակից են հասցրել հոսպիտալ: Ականատես է եղել սարսափելի մի դիպվածի՝ աչքի առաջ արկի պայթյունից զինակից ընկերներն են զոհվել: Հայացքը խրոխտ է, դեմքը՝ խաղաղ, աչքերը փակ են, բայց կոպերին դրոշմված թե ինչեր է տեսել մարտադաշտում.... սև, թավ մորուքն ու խիտ մուգ



մազերը կարծես անկոտորուն ոգու լուռ վկաները լինեն... գիտակցությունը տեղն է գալիս, սկսում է վերհիշել եղածը, թողնում եմ ու հեռանում: Առավոտյան կրկին մտնում եմ նրա մոտ: 8 ժամ է անցել, 8 գիտակից ժամ, 8 արթուն ժամ, որ դար տեսած գիշերվա է վերածվել: Նույն գիկվորն է առջևս պառկած՝ ճերմակած մորուքով ու մազերով, աչքերը անխոս ու դատարկված:

Հրաժարվում եմ տեսածիս հավատալ...

Աչքերս մշուշվում են, ցավի ծովը փորձում է հորդել դուրս, կանգնած եմ թարմ հողաշիրիմի առաջ: Անցած գիշերը թաքուն թաղում էր՝ 3 հոգի անլույս գիշերում հողին հանձնեցին հարազատի դին:

Փորձում եմ աչքերս բացել, որ վերջ դրվի այս մղձավանջին, կոպերս ծանրացել են, միտքս ինձ չի ենթարկվում: Բարձրանում եմ Շուշի: Շուշին բարձրունք է և այնտեղ է ճերմակագետս Ղազանչեցոցը: Շուշին օդ է, կյանք, տուն: Շուշին շնչել է պետք, ապրել ու շենացնել է պետք: Մտնում եմ եկեղեցի. փոշի, քարակույտ, մշուշված սրբապատկերներ ու դիմացս հոգևորականներից մեկը ձեռքերը վեր պարզած աղոթք է բարձրացնում: Աստված իմ, Աստված...: Շուշին... ինչպե՞ս եղավ: Մի բան հաստատ գիտեմ՝ կա Աստված ու նրա տունը աղոթքի տուն պիտի կոչվի:

Իջնում եմ քաղաք, ավերված տների նկուղներից տարհանում ենք մարդկանց՝ կանայք, երեխաներ, ծերեր: Բոլորի դեմքին նույն ավստոսանքն ու ցավն է. մեքենա նստելիս բոլորը շրջվում ու հետ են նայում, կարծես հրաժեշտ տալու իրենց տանը, բակին, քաղաքին...

Ախ այդ հրաժեշտի պահը, այն ինչ ստիպում է չկորցնել զգոնությունը, հավաքել հեռախոսի համարը, սպասել անվերջանալի թվացող զանգի ձայնին... պետք է հասցնել խոսել երեխաների հետ, անպայման ասել, որ լավ եմ ու շուտով միասին կլինենք, անջատել հեռախոսը՝ հավատքով, որ այդ զանգը վերջինը չի լինի և հրաժեշտի պահից առաջ մեկ զանգ էլ կլինի:

Եվ այս սարսափելի 45 օրերի ընթացքում միայն մի մխիթարանք, մի հույս, որ կրկին արթնանալու գործել է տալիս պատերազմի՝ անվերջանալի թվացող թմբիրից:

Աստծո ձայնը... այն մեղմ է, քաղցր, հանդարտ: Նրա ձայնը չեն կարող խլացնել ամենահուժկու արկերն անգամ: Նրա սերը չի կարող աղավաղել պատերազմը, նրանով հույսը չի մարում և ոչ մի անհույս թվացող մայրամուտի, նրա ուժից չքանում է ամեն անգործություն, երբ ականջիդ է հասնում մահվան ու կորստի բոթը: Նա



Վիկտոր Կարապետյան

կենդանի է, գործուն, ամենուր: Աստված միշտ մարդիկ է գտնում ու նայել է տալիս պատերազմի աչքերի մեջ, ում գործել է տալիս արհավիրքի ու չարի դեմ: Նա կանչում է մարդկանց, ովքեր շարունակում են հավատալ, աղոթել, փառաբանել:

Պատերազմը սարսափում է Աստծուց և նրա զավակներից: Պատերազմի ճամփան ուրիշ է, այն բարի չէ, բայց Աստված թույլ տվեց ինձ անցնելու այդ ճամփան: Այդ փշոտ ճամփին Աստված ինձ հետ էր և գործում էր:

ԶԷ՛, պատերազմը Աստծո գործը չէ, բայց նա գործում է նաև պատերազմում: Կարևոր է չմոռանալ կանչել նրա անունը, հանդիպել նրան ամեն առավոտ, հարցնել անելիքի և նրա ականակիքի մասին և շարունակել օրդ՝ ապրեցնել, օգնել, մխիթարել, գործել, լռել, լսել....

Իսկ պատերազմը մի օր ավարտվում է.... հայրենիքը կամ այն ինչ փրկվել է պատերազմի անհագերախից, ցավ ունի, կորուստ ավերմունք, արցունքներ: Պատերազմը թողել է իր այլանդակ եռությունը ամենուր և չնայած ինքն էլ չկա, վերջացել է, բայց շարունակում է գարշահոտել: Պետք է փարատել Արցախիս արևաքամ վերքերը, սրբել անդադար հոսող արցունքները, հանել նրա ցավ պատճառող բեկորները, պետք է մխիթարել, որ չընկճվի, չկորցնի հավատը....

**Գործի՛ր, Տեր իմ, ահա ես...ՕՐ 61 ...:** □

*\*Վիկտոր Կարապետյան Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանական Ընկերակցութեան Արցախի Ներկայացուցիչն է:*



## IN MEMORIAM: Daniel H. Abdulian, M.D.



**D**aniel Hovhannes Abdulian, M.D. transitioned peacefully to eternal life on January 14, 2021, at the age of 95. He was the last surviving child of Hovhannes and Martha (Churukian) Abdulian. He was born on March 18, 1925 in Kessab, Syria, the third of eight children. He and his siblings were brought up in a strong Christian household and attended the Armenian Evangelical Church of Kessab. Throughout his life, Daniel was a steadfast supporter of the Armenian Evangelical movement and its institutions and charitable missions.

Daniel greatly valued education. He was an outstanding student and particularly accomplished in the sciences, music, Armenian history and language. Daniel attended schools first in Kessab, then, at age 15, began his studies at the Melkonian Educational Institute in Cyprus, which was founded after the Genocide to educate exceptional Armenian students throughout the Diaspora. At the time of his death, Daniel was the oldest living Melkonian alumnus. He spoke several languages and enjoyed striking up conversations with anyone he heard speaking Armenian, Greek, French or any language he recognized. Daniel's love for music began at an early age. As a youth he crafted woodwind instruments from wild bamboo on which he played traditional Armenian songs. Daniel continued to entertain family and friends with these fine instruments, even at an advanced age. He also played the clarinet and violin.

After Melkonian, Daniel moved on to study at Aleppo College and then the American University of Beirut, where he graduated with honors, earning a degree in Pharmacology. Following graduation Daniel taught and conducted research at AUB. He was soon recruited by the University of Illinois at Chicago as a research pharmacologist and immigrated to the United States in 1952. Daniel set his sights next on medical school and attended Emory University in Atlanta for two years, then returned to UIC for the last two.

While in Atlanta, he began his courtship of his future wife Anush Churukian, a fellow Kessabtzi. They were married in June of 1956 in Detroit, where she was employed as a registered nurse. After two years in Chicago, they moved to Los Angeles, where Daniel served his medical internship. There, oldest son John Daniel was born. The next year the Abdulian family moved to Rochester, MN, where Daniel was a resident in Internal Medicine with Cardiology sub-specialization at the prestigious Mayo Clinic. While there, Daniel and Anush welcomed their second son Richard.

Following completion of his residency, Dr. Abdulian returned to Los Angeles where he established a thriving medical practice in Hollywood. He practiced in the same location at the corner of Hollywood Boulevard and La Brea for 50 years. Known as an expert diagnostician with encyclopedic knowledge and exceptional bedside manner, Dr. Abdulian provided outstanding, compassionate care for his patients. He, like his brothers Doctors Jack, Misak and Hrair, who also practiced in Los Angeles, earned an impeccable reputation for empathy, humility and dedication.

In Los Angeles Daniel's youngest child, Diana, was born. Daniel was immensely proud of his children and their professional and educational achievements. He lived an exemplary Christian life, a shining example for his children and was a warm, loving man. Daniel was devoted to many philanthropic causes. He was a long-time member and supporter of the United Armenian Congregational Church and a Board member of the Armenian Missionary Association of America. He also supported the Armenian General Benevolent Union, Merdinian Armenian School, Haigazian University, Melkonian Institute, AUB and the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America. As a lifelong lover of music, especially Armenian liturgical and classical music, he was an enthusiastic supporter of the USC Thornton Friends of Armenian music and the Lark Musical Society.

In August of 2001, Daniel's beloved and devoted wife of 45 years, Anush, passed away. Later, he began corresponding with Juliette Vartanian, a widow and sister of his friend, Hagop Ishkhanian. They married in 2002 and spent many happy, wonderful years together traveling, visiting with family and friends, and continuing to support Armenian and other philanthropic causes. Over the last years of his life, Daniel became increasingly dependent on Juliette, and she cared for him tirelessly and lovingly until the last, for which his children are eternally grateful.

Daniel was preceded in death by his wife Anush, his brothers, Hagop (Jack), Vahe, Vasken, Misak and Hrair, and his sisters, Araxie and Mary. He is survived by his wife Juliette, son John Daniel, daughter-in-law LindaKay, grandchildren Alexis and Daniel, son Richard, daughter Diana, and many beloved cousins, nieces, nephews and in-laws.

Graveside services were held on March 2 at Forest Lawn Hollywood Hills. Donations may be sent in his memory to the Armenian Missionary Association of America, Camp Arev, or the United Armenian Congregational Church. □



## Nerses Demirjian

Nerses M. "Nick" Demirjian of Belmont, MA went on a peaceful journey to enjoy Eternal Life with our Lord Jesus Christ, on February 21, 2020 at age 89.



Born in Aleppo, Syria to Moses and Lousaper Margosian Demirjian, he was the brother of the late Arousiag Koloyan, Aris Andonian and John Demirjian, and is survived by many nieces and nephews.

Nerses was American by birth, because his father was an American businessman, who spent a lot of time apart from his family. Unfortunately, he passed away in New York when Nerses was seven years old. Nerses had to come to America before age 18 otherwise he would have lost his citizenship.

A year after arriving in New York, Nerses enlisted in the Navy and served active duty from 1951-1955 and Naval reserve until 1959. Because he spoke several languages (Armenian, Arabic, Turkish and English), he served as an interpreter on the USS Yosemite and USS Everglades in Europe.

Nerses married Mary Andonian in Beirut, Lebanon in August 1963. He was the devoted father of Gillian Da Silva of FL and Ara H. Demirjian of MA, and lovingly remembered by grandchildren, Brianna and Angelise Da Silva of FL.

Proud of his service, he taught his children to love and respect our country. He was a lifetime member of Amvets Post 41 Watertown, MA.

Nerses and Mary joined the First Armenian Church of Belmont, MA in 1965 and became communicant members. Nerses served the Church in various capacities, as Chairman of the Deacons, sang in the choir for many years, and was a member of the Couples' Club.

Nerses was a true believer, a peacemaker and a friend to all who knew him. Integrity and honesty were a few of his traits. He worked for Cabot Corp. as a R&D Machinist. His faith gave him courage and carried him through his prolonged battle against Prostate Cancer. He loved unconditionally and in return he was loved.

A celebration of his life, officiated by Rev. Dikran Youmshakian, was held on February 27, 2020 at First Armenian Church of Belmont. □

## Grace Kavjian

Grace Haigouhi Kabakjian Kavjian, wife of Dr. Edward Kavjian, a former AMAA President, passed away on October 30, 2020. She was 97.



Born on June 29, 1923 in Philadelphia, PA, she was the sixth and youngest child of Haigazoon and Aghavni (Kludjian) Kabakjian, Armenian immigrants from Marsovan, Turkey.

Grace remembered her childhood fondly and never realized her family was poor. As a six-year-old living during the Depression, she was unfazed, because the family was together, they had a home, and there was always food on the table.

After graduating from West Philadelphia High School in 1941, Grace, inspired by her mother who was a nurse, dreamed of going to college to be a dietitian. Unfortunately, her father vetoed the idea, but Grace was determined to further her education and decided to complete an 18-month laboratory technician course instead. She worked as a telephone operator at the Bell Telephone Co., for a year before being admitted to the program, and then continued to work nights while in school. Following her graduation, she moved to New Bedford, MA to work in a hospital laboratory.

Grace married Dr. Edward Kavjian in 1951, and they settled in Drexel Hill, PA for a few years before moving to Haverford, PA. They had five children and Grace sought to instill in them the same values passed on by her parents: faith in God and the importance of family, hard work, hospitality, generosity, kindness and service.

Faith was always an important part of Grace's life. Her father was one of the charter members of the Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church (AMCC) in Havertown, PA, and she was an integral part of the church community. She served in various capacities, singing in the choir before she married and serving on the Board of Deacons many times, well into her upper years. After she and Dr. Kavjian moved to Dunwoody Village, a retirement community, Grace continued getting to know church members of all ages, inviting people for dinner and hosting women's lunches.

Beyond her faith in God, nothing was more important to Grace than her family. It

is a testament to Grace's efforts that even now, with the addition of grandchildren's spouses and seven great-grandchildren, the family gathers for Thanksgiving and plans annual beach vacations.

Grace modeled a life of generosity, supporting causes that were important to her including many Armenian organizations such as AMCC, the AMAA and the Armenian Sisters' Academy.

Grace is survived by her five children: Edward Jr. (Mary Jo), Carol (Edward Kaiserian), Joyce (Peter Stephenson), David (Maureen), and Judy (William Owens), 15 grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be planned at a later date. Donations may be made to Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church or the AMAA. □

## Edward Medzian

Edward S. Medzian of Hillsborough, CA passed away at home on December 2, 2020 with his family surrounding him. He was 100.



Edward was born on August 26, 1920, on a farm in Fresno, CA to Sahag and Hanum Medzian (formerly Medzadourian). His parents were survivors of the Armenian Genocide who fled to the United States via Ellis Island from Kharpert, Turkey, settled in Massachusetts and then later in Fresno. He had four older siblings, Rose, Stanley, Marge and Roxie.

Edward was a World II veteran and a true patriot, serving as a Captain in the 296th Regiment Infantry of the United States Army. An exemplary student, he joined ROTC while in high school in Fresno. As an officer, he travelled around the United States and abroad, serving as a medic and training his troops in various forms of warfare. He also helped recruit women into the military. When asked about what it meant to serve his country during World War II, he responded: "duty, responsibility, and love of country."

In 1943, Edward met the love of his life, Gloria Boyajian, when he visited the Armenian Congregational Church of Detroit, MI, where Gloria was a Sunday School teacher. At the time, Edward was stationed at Fort Custer in Battle Creek, MI, and knew immediately he would marry her. They married in July 1944 in a military camp church in Abilene, TX.

After the war, Edward and Gloria settled in San Francisco for a few years, where their daughter Barbara was born. The young family moved to Hillsborough in 1957 because they wanted a country atmosphere close to San Francisco.

Edward graduated from pharmacy school at the University of California in 1942 just before he enlisted in the Army. After the war, along with his brother, the late Stanley Medzian, Edward opened the Sir Francis Drake Pharmacy located in San Francisco's Sir Francis Drake Hotel. Later, Edward obtained his real estate broker's license and owned and managed properties throughout the Bay Area. He also had an antique business with his wife and daughter at the Collective Antiques in San Mateo until 2012.

Devoted to his faith, Edward had leadership roles in his church and other organizations locally and nationally. He served two terms as the national head of the Knights of Vartan and served as moderator of Calvary Armenian Congregational Church in San Francisco for many years. A true Renaissance man, he pursued many interests including international travel, gardening, fishing, reading, antique and model train collecting, raising backyard chickens and playing backgammon.

Family was the center of Edward's life and he often said that "faith and love of family" were his guiding principles. Edward and Gloria were married for 72 years before her passing in 2016. They had a close extended family, made many lifelong friends, and enjoyed an active social and philanthropic life in Hillsborough. Edward is survived by his daughter Barbara Medzian, two granddaughters Michelle Kezirian (d. Peter), and Nicole Simonian (Andrew), and two great grandchildren Alexander and Ashley Simonian.

A memorial service will be held at a later time. Donations may be made to the Edward and Gloria Medzian Endowment Fund of Calvary Armenian Congregational Church in San Francisco, CA; the Edward and Gloria Medzian Endowment Fund at the AMAA; or the Knights of Vartan in Fresno, CA. □

## Berge Nazarian

Berge Nazarian, longtime resident of North Hollywood, CA, made his transition from this world to his heavenly home on January 22, 2021. He was 78.

Born March 4, 1942 in Aleppo, Syria, Berge was the youngest child of Nazar

and Alice Nazarian. He spent his early childhood in his hometown and attended Armenian Evangelical schools.

Early in childhood Berge was struck with a rare eye disease and came to the United States with his mother for an eye surgery which was successful. Two years later, he returned to the Middle East and in 1964 he permanently settled in the United States, where he pursued a GED and earned his high school diploma.

Upon graduation he became an automobile mechanic and owned a Mobil gas station, which he sold in 1978 and was employed by the General Motors Company for 28 years. In 1971, he married Alice Shohmelian and was blessed with two daughters.

Berge Nazarian will be remembered in the following ways.

### **First, Berge was truly a family man.**

He was a devoted son, a loving husband, a caring father and grandfather. He also was a loving brother of his four older siblings. He was particularly fond of his six grandchildren and spent quality time with them. He was a tireless worker who provided for his family and set an outstanding example of work ethics.

**Second, Berge was a loving and giving person** who lived a full life, focused on family and friends. But beyond that he reached out and touched many lives, relating to people from all walks of life. He had a sense of humor, passion for service and a friendly spirit which penetrated the hearts of those with whom he associated.

**Third, Berge had a positive attitude toward life and people.** He loved nature, loved to travel, was a friendly person and made many friends. He looked at the positive qualities of others. He was a witty person with a sense of humor. Berge never complained even in challenging and trying times. In the past five years, he had been battling several health issues, but he never complained, on the contrary he was grateful for the care that was given to him.

**Fourth, Berge was a man of character.** He was a gentleman in whom there was no malice or wickedness. He was completely transparent, sincere and honest. He was a man of integrity and tried to maintain a high standard of ethics every day. He loved the Lord and counted his blessings.



Berge leaves behind his wife Alice, and two daughters Silva (Jimmy) Se-radarian and Arlene (Ken) Zapko and six grandchildren. He also leaves behind his brother John and many nephews, nieces and relatives.

Funeral services were held at Forest Lawn Cemetery of Hollywood, on February 24. Memorial donations may be made to either the AMAA (Berge Nazarian Endowment Fund) or to Children of Armenia Fund (COAF). □

*Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian*

## Robert Sarkis

Robert Sarkis passed away on December 28, 2020 in Seattle, WA at the age of 87. He was a patient in a nursing home the last three months.



Robert had an extraordinary life. He was the son of Missak Sarkis, who was born in Ekbez, and Marie Karamanoukian, born in Aintab. Both paternal and maternal families were survivors of the Armenian Genocide and had established themselves in Aleppo, Syria. Both families were active members and supporters of the Armenian Evangelical Church and the Aleppo community. Robert grew up with values from that warm and nurturing environment.

He attended Bethel and Emmanuel Armenian Evangelical Schools of Aleppo for his elementary education and Aleppo College for high school and junior college. These educational institutions shaped his character and influenced his extracurricular interests in life.

Robert was an engineer by profession. He earned his bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the American University of Beirut in 1955 and a master's degree in Structural Engineering from Stanford University in 1958. After graduating from Stanford, Robert went to Seattle to work as an engineer at Boeing Company. In 1967 he relocated to Southern California and worked for Aerospace Corporation and Bechtel Corporation. He returned to Seattle in 1972 to again work with Boeing until his early retirement in 1988.

Although an engineer by profession, his love and passion was art. While visiting his family in Beirut in 1965, he met Artist Paul Guiragossian and purchased



a painting from him, the first work of art in his collection. His meeting with the artist sparked a passion for visual arts and started a 50-year journey of collecting Art. Robert amassed a huge collection of art, comprised of paintings, sculptures and drawings, mostly modern and contemporary, from the second half of the 20th century. He was active in the Seattle art Community and was loved and respected for his knowledge of art and his keen eye for quality of artworks.

Robert and his wife of 36 years, Shaké Balmanoukian Sarkis, built a beautiful architect-designed house in Seattle, completed in 1993, where they showcased much of their collection. Occasionally, Shaké and Robert donated artworks from the collection to various museums and lent artworks for many museum shows in the United States and overseas.

Robert will be immensely missed by his loving wife and partner Shaké, brother Hratch Sarkis, sisters Silva Marounian and Edma Kizirian and by numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, relatives and friends. □

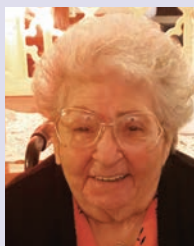
## Kay Zoolalian

Katherine “Kay” Seda Keosian Zoolalian passed away on November 18, 2020 in her home in Whittier, CA at the age of 95.

Kay was a very devoted, compassionate Christian woman, who spent her time and her energies serving the Armenian community indiscriminately, based on their needs. She was warm and welcoming toward newcomers when she helped plant Christian Outreach for Armenians Church in Glendale, CA in the 1980s. She stood at the Church entrance welcoming everyone. She was consistent - if you asked her to do something you knew she would accomplish it.

She served on the Executive Committee of Christian Outreach for Armenians and she encouraged her husband Chuck to get involved. The joy and excitement Kay demonstrated was genuine and real.

She was a silent giver for the ministry - she gave her time, her talents and her



treasure. She served over two decades at Camp AREV including multiple terms on the Camp AREV Committee and helped with the Armenian Evangelical Social Service Center in Hollywood. Her commute was significant as she attended the Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church in Downey. She never pushed herself forward, but people pushed her forward because of her commitment.

Always close to Kay's heart was her commitment to children and Armenian Christian ministries. To continue her efforts, a memorial fund has been established with Camp AREV, the Christian camping ministry of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America that both Kay and her beloved husband Chuck served with for four decades.

Kay is survived by her daughter, Christine “Chrissie” Zoolalian-Anderson, and her three grandchildren, John, Kathy and Susan Anderson.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, a private family service was held. The family is planning to have a memorial service to celebrate Kay's life one year from now once it is safe to gather. □

*Jesus said... “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?” John 11:25-26*

The AMAA Board of Directors and staff wish to extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the following deceased friends.

\* Gladys Abidian  
*Belmont, MA*

Garbis Der Yeghiayan  
*La Verne, CA*

\* Christine Derdarian  
*Livonia, MI*

\* Diran Dohanian  
*Belmont, MA*

\* George Geragosian  
*Stoneham, MA*

\* Hagop Geuvjehizian  
*Atadena, CA*

\* Razmik Gharibian  
*Royal Oak, MI*

\* Berj Gueyikian, M.D.  
*Lincolnwood, IL*

\* Gladys Aranosian Hayes  
*Pembroke, NH*

\* Martin Madancy  
*Boston, MA*

\* Dr. Y. Leon Maksoudian  
*San Luis Obispo, CA*

\* Carolyn Kapp Mardirosian  
*Tulsa, CA*

\* John Montagano  
*Brockton, MA*

\* Edward Osepien  
*Huntington Beach, CA*

\* Virginia Salhany  
*Pawtucket, RI*

\* Marie Kevorkian Toumaian  
*Rancho Santa Margarita, CA*

Lucy Tutunjian  
*Beirut, Lebanon*

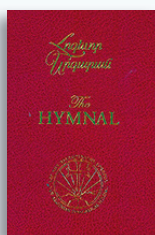
\* Rose Marie Keyishian Warman  
*Olmstedville, NY*

\* *Memorial donations designated for AMAA*

## AMAA Bookstore - Featured Books



**Armenian English Diglot  
New Testament**  
*Western Armenian and  
Today's English version.*  
Item # 508 - Price: \$15.00



**The Hymnal (Hokevor  
Yerkaran)**  
*Հոգևոր Երգարան*  
Bilingual Hymns  
Item # 353 - Price: \$30.00



**History of the Armenian  
Evangelical Churches of  
North and South America**  
*History of AEUNA churches,  
their founders, locations,  
pastors, leaders, and programs.*  
Published by AEUNA  
Item # 401CO - Price: \$10.00



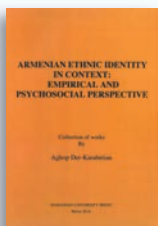
**A Century of Armenian  
Protestantism 1846-1946**  
(Second Printing)  
*The author recounts the  
history of the Armenian  
Evangelical movement  
from its beginning to 1946.*  
By Leon Arpee  
Item # 365 - Price: \$15.00



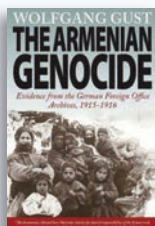
**A History of Armenian  
Christianity (Second  
Printing)**  
*A fairly objective overview  
of the Christian pilgrimage  
of the Armenian people  
throughout the centuries.*  
By Leon Arpee  
Item # 366 - Price: \$25.00



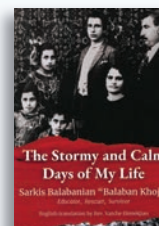
**The Genesis and Early  
Development of the Armenian  
Missionary Association of America**  
*History of the founding of the AMAA.*  
By Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian  
Item # 403 - Price: \$20.00



**Armenian Ethnic Identity  
in Context: Empirical and  
Psychosocial Perspective**  
*Collections of Works*  
By Aghop Der-Karabetian  
Item # 404CO-HU  
Price: \$20.00  
All proceeds will go to  
Haigazian University.



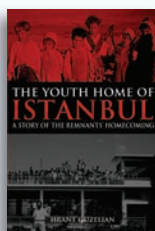
**The Armenian Genocide**  
*Evidence from the German  
Foreign Office Archives,  
1915-1916.*  
Compiled and edited by  
Wolfgang Gust  
Item # 349 - Price: \$75.00



**The Stormy and Calm  
Days of My Life**  
*Educator, Rescuer, Survivor.*  
Sarkis Balabanian (Balaban Khoja)  
Translated by Rev. Vatche Ekmekjian  
Item # 406 - Price: \$20.00  
All Proceeds go to AMAA Balabanian  
Ed. Fund



**The Armenians of Musa  
Dagh: From Obscurity  
to Genocide Resistance  
and Fame 1840-1915**  
By Vahram  
Shemmashian, Ph.D.  
Item # 407 (hard cover)  
- Price: \$40; Item # 408  
(paper back) - Price: \$30



**The Youth Home of  
Istanbul: A Story of the  
Remnants' Homecoming.**  
By Hrant Guzelian  
Item # 357- Price: \$20.00



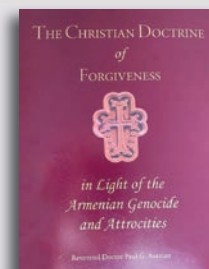
**The Recipes of Musa Dagh**  
*An Armenian Cookbook in a  
Dialect of its Own.*  
By Alberta, Anna and  
Louisa Magzarian  
Item # 364CO - Price: \$19.50

For a complete listing of our Bookstore items and for orders, please visit [www.amaa.org/bookstore](http://www.amaa.org/bookstore) or contact AMAA Bookstore: 201.265.2607

## Received With Thanks

The AMAA acknowledges with gratitude receipt of the following new publication

**THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF FORGIVENESS: In light of the Armenian Genocide and Atrocities** by Rev. Dr. Paul G. Avazian - This work was originally written in 1974 as part of Rev. Avazian's requirement for completion of his Doctorate in Philosophy at the California Graduate School of Theology. Text and format are based on an exact transcription of the original work.





# AMAA'S POST-WAR HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS IN ARTSAKH



Following the worst fighting in decades, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) is committed to meeting the humanitarian needs of our Artsakh brothers and sisters.

In an effort to extend economic aid, connect Diaspora families with their Artsakh kin, and embrace the needy and displaced both in and outside of Artsakh, AMAA has launched several initiatives to help families restore their lives, which were devastated by the recent war. With your help, AMAA will do the utmost to provide Artsakh with the platform to rebuild *stronger for the future!*



Distribution of Bibles

In Matthew 19:14, Jesus says, "Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Continuous turmoil and dislocation surround our children in Artsakh, leading to serious physical and emotional needs which have affected their spirit. AMAA distributed 1,000 Bibles to these young people, to help strengthen their faith, guide their steps, and discover a God who loves them.

AMAA commissioned local factories to make sets of clothing and shoes for children. The vision is to provide new, quality clothing to school-age children, free of charge so that they may attend school and go out in warmth and with confidence.



New Clothing for Children

## EMPOWER AN ARTSAKH FAMILY



This new program reaches out to Artsakh families who choose to remain in their homeland, as well as refugees in Armenia. When you choose to support a family you are directly impacting their lives and providing hope. Imagine the joy they will feel knowing that someone

across the globe cares. Your sponsorship will empower each family with much-needed income to help alleviate long-term pressures of poverty and access to AMAA services available in their region. Help a family to rise up out of poverty and move toward a sustainable future!

**Amount to sponsor one family for one year:**  
**\$2,400**

(Each family enrolled in the program will receive a quarterly remittance of \$600. Sponsors and families are encouraged to build a relationship through letter writing.)

## INVEST IN A FAMILY'S FUTURE

A decent home is the core for any family to grow and feel secure. In partnership with the Dutch NGO, *Mission Possible*, and Dutch Evangelical TV Station, *EO-Matterdaad*, damaged houses in Artsakh are being renovated. Your investment will improve a family's living conditions and provide housing stability.

**Sponsorship levels for home renovations:**  
**\$5,000 \$2,000 \$1,000 \$500**

## STAYING ON TRACK WITH E-LEARNING

Beyond the classroom, children need to remain engaged and active in the learning process. In partnership with Teach for Armenia, AMAA is distributing Lenovo tablets to children who have limited financial resources. Tablets are equipped with a special chip for free access to internet and apps and games to help with educational and psychological recovery of each child. Your gift will help inspire a child to discover a new world of learning!

**Amount to sponsor one tablet:**  
**\$200**



## FOOD PROVISIONS

Imagine being a parent and seeing your child hungry. For many families, food insecurity is a grim reality, especially in the aftermath of the war. AMAA's food assistance program will provide families (with children ages newborn-12) with monetary funds to buy food and other essential items. Together, we can help end hunger for these families.



**Amount to sponsor one family of 5-6 for one month:**  
**\$200**

To make a donation please use the attached envelope or visit AMAA website at [www.amaa.org](http://www.amaa.org)





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